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PPA

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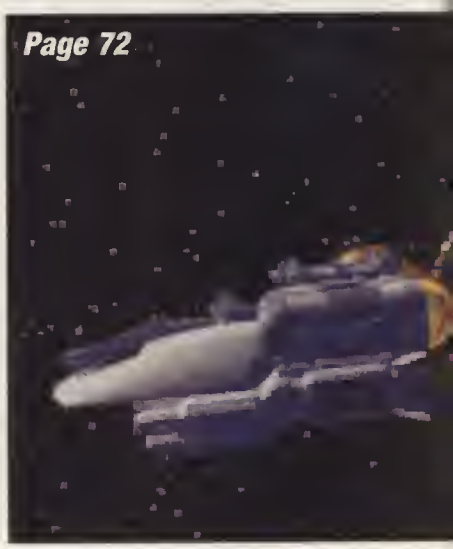

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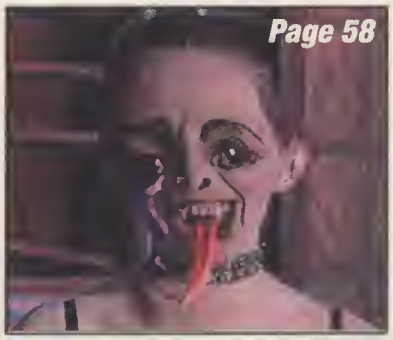

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Sega's 3D thumpathon makes the transition to the PC with the assistance of the Diamond Edge card. It's certainly gone done a treat in the *Zone* office...

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Tennis racquets at the ready! Aerosmith star in a game that blatantly encourages you to strut your stuff.

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Special thanks this month to Richard Crook

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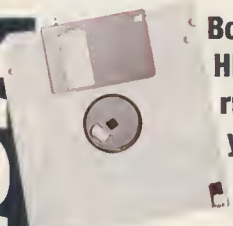
HD DISK



Both the demos on this month's HD disks run from DOS. If you are running Windows 95, shut down your machine and restart in DOS mode. For *Tempest 2000* change to your floppy drive and run TEMPEST 2000.EXE. If you have a SoundBlaster or compatible sound card it will auto detect. To run the game from your hard drive create a *Tempest* directory and copy all the files from the floppy over. For *Screamer* change to your floppy drive and type <install>. Select the options you want on installation and follow the on-screen instructions. Again, *Screamer* will detect a SoundBlaster or compatible sound card on boot.

Screamer (Virgin Interactive)

In the past, racing simulators on the PC have been aimed at the gear-headed simulator fan in the form of *IndyCar Racing* and *F1 Grand Prix Manager*. Action fans now get the chance to burn rubber in this arcade recreation of 3D smashes like *Ridge Racer* and *Daytona*. So get ready to put your pedal to the metal and push the revs into the red zone with this playable demo brought to you courtesy of *PC Zone* and Virgin Interactive.

Controls

Up arrow	Accelerate
Down arrow	Brake
Left	Steer left
Right	Steer right
F10	Change view

Tempest 2000 (Atari)

Geff Minter's classic re-incarnation of an arcade oldie was an enormous success on the Atari Jaguar console. Now PC owners get the chance to find out what all the fuss is about in this huge playable demo from our friends at Atari.

Tempest 2000 takes us back to the glory days, when action was the essential element in any game and the controls were kept to a bare minimum. Move the Tempest from left to right around the neon grid and blast the aliens that crawl relentlessly up the sides. Collect the power-ups and aim for that high score. Simple!

Controls

Left arrow	Rotate left
Right arrow	Rotate right
Ctrl	Fi

CD-ROM DISC

To access the plethora of orgasmic playable demos on this *PC Zone* cover CD, change to your CD-ROM drive and type <PCZONE>. The menu is easy to use and simply clicking on the demo you want to run with the left mouse button will launch the installer for it automatically. Just follow the on-screen instructions.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Beavis and Butt-head (Viacom New Media)

These two teenagers need no introduction, stars of MTV and Channel 4, *Beavis and Butt-head* have made it to the Windows 95 desktop courtesy of Viacom New Media. The adventure starts off in the classroom, before you make your excuses to leave the class and head out into the school to cause chaos and eventually escape on to the streets.

The mouse is all you need to guide the boys around the game. Use the left button to click on various locations and objects to use them. Hold down the right button to access the pop-up menu where you can choose from a variety of action icons, including walk, talk, use and the essential inventory. Guide

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclosing your HD as proof of purchase and a cheque for a whole £1, and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (PCZ35), Electronic Publishing Unit, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

Your Details *(Please print clearly)*:

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post Code: .....

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles between 10.30am and 5.30pm on: 0171-917 7693

(Left) Ugh! You'll need a strong stomach to play *Loogie* – Beavis and Butt-head at their very worst.

(Right) Get ready for *Extreme Pinball*...

Beavis and Butt-head to their destinies, which will no doubt lead to endless gags about butts, chicks and nads. This is gonna be cool, heh heh heh.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Windows 95

Loogie Game
(Viacom New Media)

It's the terrible twins again (yes, Beavis and Butt-head). This time they're on the roof, gathering phlegm in their throats to hurl on the unsuspecting victims down below. Score points for the more difficult shots (like the cyclist and the squirrel) and eventually save up enough spit to hurl a huge greeny at Mr McVicar, the principal. Once he runs inside the school it's your chance to get outside into the town. Holding the left button determines the length and power of the loogie, let go when you think you've got a bulls-eye. Use the arrow at the side of the screen as a guide.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Windows 95

Voodoo Lounge
(Virgin Interactive)

Wow, cats it's the Stones. Take a sneak peek at the *Rolling Stones Voodoo Lounge* in this interactive demo from Virgin Interactive. Follow the virtual guide on a tour of the Rollilng Stones' musical environment. They may be wrinkly, a bit over the hill and more than a little stale, but this demo looks and sounds pretty up to date to us. Check it out.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Windows

The Hive (Trimark)

Hot on the heels of *Rebel Assault 2* in last month's issue, we bring you yet another space shoot 'em up in the same vein. Sit back and watch the impressive rolling introduction and then get ready on that mouse button to shoot the enemy from the sky in the interactive, second part of the demo.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Windows 95

Radix (Epic Mega Games)

Epic Mega Game's latest shareware release is definitely in the *Descent* mould – 'And why not!' we hear you scream.

(Left) See what you think of impressive looking shoot 'em up *The Hive*.

Guide your ship through the first few levels, blasting anything that moves and securing each level before moving on to the next. Don't forget to register.

Controls: Mouse, definable keyboard
Specifications: 4Mb

Christmas Jazz
(Epic Mega Games)

It's that small cute bunny rabbit with a rather deadly gun. Jazz Jack rabbit returns for a Christmas blast in this PC platformer to beat all others. *Jazz* was, and still is, one of the better platform offerings on the PC and should see you happily into the new year.

Controls: Joystick, gamepad, definable keys
Specifications: 4Mb

Extreme Pinball
(Epic Mega Games/EA)

Following from the enormous success of *Epic Pinball*, Epic Mega Games brings us yet another set of tables. Epic's earlier releases proved to be one of the better series of pinball games and despite the recent release of what seems like hundreds of 3D versions of the genre, *Extreme Pinball* remains very playable, and is backed by impressive visuals and a pumping sound track.

Controls:

Down arrow	Shoot ball
Right/ctrl	Right flipper
Left/ctrl	Left flipper
Spacebar	Tilt

Specifications: 4Mb

Help!

Is the CD playing up? Is the HD stuck in the drive? Is your PC driving you nuts? Well panic no longer, because help is at hand in the form of Miles Tudor. Just pick up the phone and call one of these two numbers:

0171-917 7693
or
0171-917 7692

Lines are open between 10.30am and 5.30 pm Monday - Friday

If you are calling either help line, please take note of the following points:

- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down any relevant info.
- Have as much relevant information to hand as possible, ie system spec, amount of ram and base memory in your machine etc. Also remember the nature of the fault and which month's issue the CD or disk came from.
- Ideally you should have your PC running and at hand when you call.

(Above) *Tempest*, the Atari classic.

(Left) Yay! It's the *Zone* team's fave footy game, *Actua Soccer*.

(Below) Check out the full playable level of *Pitfall*...

« Steel Panthers (SSI)

A wargamer's dream, surely. *The Panzer General* series in the States was one of the best-selling titles last year. SSI's domination of the wargame genre continues with the follow-up, *Steel Panthers*. Plenty of historical detail and hex-based fun for all the family, kids.

Controls: Mouse

Silent Hunter (SSI)

Well, blow me down and shiver me timbers, it's yet another SSI game. This time leaving the safe havens of the shoreline, *Silent Hunter* puts you way down beneath the waves as the captain of a submarine. This playable demo is incredibly detailed and is only limited in length. Find the enemy ships, wind up those torpedoes and let 'em have it.

Controls: Mouse

Actua Soccer (Gremlin Interactive)

So good we've given it to you twice, wahey! Last month we brought you the roller, this month the fully playable demo of God's finest Footy game, courtesy of Gremlin Interactive.

Controls: Joystick, keyboard

Turrican 2 (FunSoft)

Something of an Atari ST and Amiga classic here, brought to life again on the PC by FunSoft. Guide the trooper from ledge to ledge fending off the unwanted attention of numerous bad guys.

Controls: Arrow keys for direction, spacebar to fire

Specifications: 4Mb; disable any memory managers installed

Pitfall '95 (Activision)

Activision's first foray into the Windows 95 desktop. Guide the Indy-type bloke around the jungle using your whip to banish the nasty creatures and beasts that lurk in the shadows. This is a full playable level from the finished game.

Controls: Definable in Windows menu

Specifications: Windows 95

Hardball 5 (Accolade)

More classic baseball, ball park action in this playable demo of the latest offering from the Accolade stables.

Controls: Joystick, keyboard

Tempest 2000 (Atari)

Please refer to the HD disk description for instructions.

Blender (Dennis Publishing)

A fully interactive magazine on a CD from the publishers of *PC Zone*, so it must be brilliant, right? Use the mouse to click your way through the features, videos, sounds and interviews that make up the best interactive magazine available. So you can't read it on the bog, who cares!

Controls: Mouse

PATCHES

Command & Conquer Patch

A couple of patches so you can make your own customised difficulty levels if you're finding *C&C* a little tough.

Command & Conquer Update

Update your version of *C&C* to remove a few graphical display errors, and tweak some of the defensive and attacking powers of various units to even things up a bit. Especially during network play.

Tech specs

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Simpsons WAD

A totally brilliant WAD that changes all the graphics and sounds in *Doom 2* to recreate the Simpsons. You get to play the part of Homer on a quest for more doughnuts, blasting your way through all the well-known characters until you come to face Mr Burns on the final level. Doah!

UTILITIES

Essentials

As always we've gathered together the essential utilities to make life that little bit easier.

Graphic Workshop for Windows: Image viewing and file conversion

Winzip 6.0: Essential Windows front end for archiving files

Winzip 95 6.0: As above for Windows 95 users

Paint Shop Pro 3.11: Image editing and retouching

QuickTime for Windows 2.03: View movies on your PC

Video for Windows 1.1: View .Avis with ease

McAfee Anti-Virus: Shareware virus protection

McAfee Anti-Virus 95: Virus protection for Windows 95 users

Win32: 32-bit extensions for Windows 3.1 users

WinG: Microsoft's graphic engine for Windows 3.1 users

Internet applications

Ameol: Get on line to CIX with the best off-line reader around

Ameol 95: As above, but for Windows 95 users

WebEdit: HTML editor for anybody wanting to set a home page

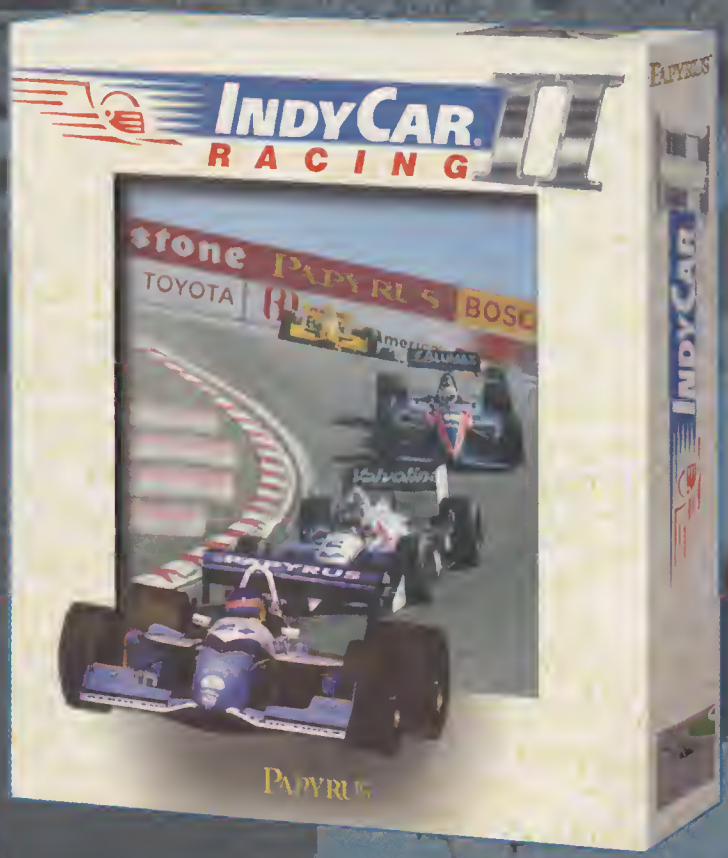
HotMetal: And another one!

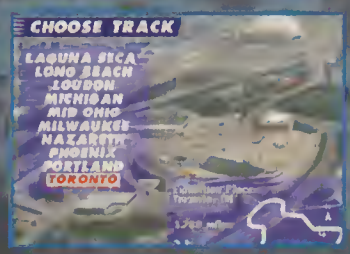
Microsoft Internet Access: And another one too! (for *Word 6*)

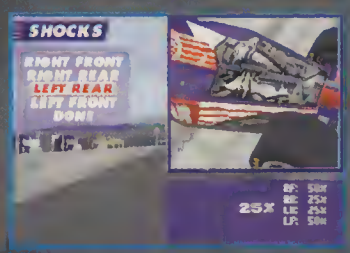
Internet Decoding Application: UU, MIME, SHIP and BTOA Encoding/decoding. Essential for sending or receiving files over the Net.

"INDYCAR RACING 2 IS DEFINITELY THE BEST RACING SIM SO FAR. BRILLIANT." 9 OUT OF 10 PC REVIEW

"WILL CRAMMOND AND HIS TEAM BE LEFT REELING WITH THE BLOWS?" 90% PC ZONE CLASSIC







IndyCar® Racing II features the most realistic car physics model providing authentic handling, and the closest experience possible to driving behind the wheel of a real IndyCar. Papyrusís new addition of high-resolution graphics that have been optimised for incredible frame rates, and the strengthened opponent intelligence, will surely promise to make IndyCar® Racing II the latest and greatest in racing simulations.

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PAPYRUS

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BULLETIN

Virgin Grabs Bethesda

Bethesda software, creators of *Future Shock*, have some stunning releases on the way. Chris Anderson reports from Washington.

PC GAME GIANT VIRGIN HAS JUST signed up distribution rights for all of Bethesda Software's new games, and having visited Bethesda's offices in Washington DC to look at how they're doing, it's easy to see why Virgin rushed in to get in first and sign them up.

The next three releases to come from Bethesda are going to be very special indeed, starting with *Daggerfall*, the sequel to *Arena*, Bethesda's massive RPG. *Daggerfall* utilises *Xngine*, Bethesda's highly flexible new game engine, to give players total freedom of movement and the game shows vast improvements over *Arena* in every aspect. The towns and locations are bigger, the landscapes rise and fall with hills and valleys and you can now travel around the game on foot, horseback or even a horse-drawn wagon. Distant places can be reached by travelling in a real 3D ship and there will be battle sequences as you traverse the treacherous high seas.

Bethesda will also use their *Xngine* to produce *10th Planet*, a space combat game that manages to make *X-Wing* look decidedly bland by comparison. The game's graphics are superb and the spaceships absolutely huge. *10th Planet* looks set to be the space action game by which all others will be judged.

Also on the way is *Xcar* (experimental car racing) which also uses *Xngine* to put players in a true 3D environment. We haven't seen this one running yet, but Bethesda predict that it will be the best racing game on the PC, with lots of hot cars to choose from, plus the option to build the vehicle of your dreams and then try it out on the track.

All of these titles will be investigated in detail in future issues of *PC Zone*, but if you need more info now, contact Virgin on 0171-368 2255.

(Above) *Daggerfall*: bigger, better and much prettier.

(Right) *Xcar* could give *The Need for Speed* and *Screamer* a run for their money.

(Far right) Blistering space combat in *10th Planet*.

(Above) Bloody lovely! Gorgeous graphics and moody atmosphere in *Nemesis*.

Zork: The Saga Continues

Activision is gearing up for the release of *Nemesis*, the next episode in the highly popular *Zork* adventure series. Activision has taken on board the criticisms made of *Return To Zork* to come up with an adventure that it believes will give the punters exactly what they want. Consequently, *Nemesis* will be a more haunting experience than *RTZ*, taking the player back to the dark landscapes of the original *Zork* text adventures. In the new game you play a lone adventurer from the original *Zork* series, who finds four trapped souls inside a temple. All four are doomed to be tortured for eternity at the hands of a baddie they call the Nemesis. The souls claim they used to be alchemists about to discover the secret of eternal life before the Nemesis killed them. The objective is to free the poor trapped souls by helping them to regain control over the four elements: fire, water, earth and air. *Nemesis* features over 30 minutes of live video, a handy help system for people who are crap at adventures, and a screenplay by Edith Swensen, who worked on *Star Trek: TNG*. *Nemesis* will be out in March. Hopefully we'll have a review in our next issue. For details call Activision on 0171-742 9400.

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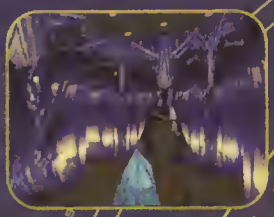

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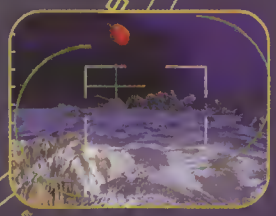

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Quake no longer _Quake_, _Doom III_, and the return of rockets and shotguns. Big news from iD Software in the States. David McCandless sorts the wheat from the chaff.

Quake No

Dispatches

+++ _Canon Sound_

If you're still searching for that special big sound, you'd do well to cock an ear to Canon's new SV-15A speakers. With their own built-in amplifiers the SV-15As don't suffer from 'tinny' sound and deliver up to 40watts without any distortion for maximum 'boom' effect.

The SV-15A speakers include an integrated bracket housing for wall mounting and are also magnetically shielded, so they can be placed right next to your monitor without the risk of interference. The speakers also incorporate Canon's unique Wide Dispersion Sound (WDS) technology and two individual inputs, enabling two sources to be connected at once.

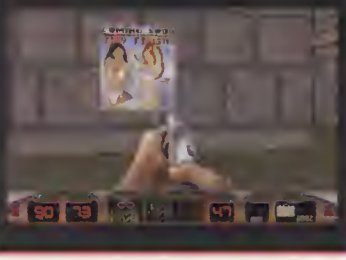
The Canon SV-15A speakers are expected to retail at around £179 (excluding VAT). Contact Canon on 0121-666 6262 for further information.

+++ _Duke Nukem 3 Delayed_

The greatest game since _Doom_ (allegedly), yes, we mean _Duke Nukem 3D_, has been delayed and will not be available until March.

An unfinished demo of the shareware version of the game was available before Christmas (some publications have reviewed the game on the strength of this) but developer Apogee has held the full release date back to ensure that the game is as near perfect as possible, by changing some of the weepons, visuals, enemies and levels – ie everything. The company is also making sure that the level editor is as easy to use as possible, which will certainly ensure a sudden explosion of top levels bursting onto the scene as soon as the game is released proper.

Look out for a full review of _Duke Nukem 3_, the level editor and the numerous network options in next month's _PC Zone_.



Play the demo on our cover disc

You'll find the entire transcript of the iD/American McGee statement on this month's cover CD.

(Below) **Q:** Can the anti-Christianity stuff be kept to a minimum? **A:** Who says that's Jesus anyway?! That could just be Bob or something.

For one horrible moment there, you thought that sensational headline was true, didn't you? _Quake_, iD's follow-up to _Doom_ had been quashed. So did we. And we ran through the building, screaming and stabbing ourselves through the heart. But the truth is a little more hopeful – as reported by iD employee American McGee (yes, that is his real name) on the Internet. Due to "copyright problems in Germany" _Quake_ has had to be renamed. Not only that, but the release date has been set back to Spring this year. Why?

"We are making it better," explains McGee. "That is all there is to it... we took a good look at where the game was going and decided to take it in some other direction. Yes, it will still be everything you ever wanted from the original _Quake_ idea, minus some things we thought sucked, and plus some things that we think were missing from the old design (and) we're still figuring out some way to have all the people who send us mail bugging us about _Quake_ run over by a truck."

And to completely strangle even more rumour-mongering, McGee then went on to answer _all_ the questions fired at him after his initial message. However, probing enquiries about _Quake_'s gameplay, graphics and engine spawned even more mystery about the return of shotguns and rockets. Read on.

Generally...

Quake will still have medieval settings as planned, but, McGee says, "While the architecture will remain the same, we are planning some new stuff. I'm not saying what yet though." The central character will be as dynamic as _Doom_'s but will be able to look up, jump, lean, and climb ("maybe"). There will also be swimming (but no drowning) and other 'interactive' elements.

"You won't be able to throw people," McGee elaborates. "But all weapons will impart some velocity to the 'victim'. If the weapon is strong enough it will make him leave the ground. We have managed to get dead bodies to fly up into supports across the ceiling."

McGee goes on to be quite excitingly cagey about the weapons in the game. "There are three right now and we're not sure of the final count." And that he is "not sure" that the 'Hell Spawn Matrix Death Cube' weapon much derided by _Quake_'s followers will be in the game. But, more interestingly, he mentions that if you "kill someone who is carrying _rockets_ he might explode and take you with him." And this sparks off a series of probing queries:

Q: You mentioned rockets – in a medieval setting?

A: Hmmm... things could change you know.

More!*

*sort of

Q: You've been letting all these little comments about modern elements (like rockets) sort of slide...?
A: Nope. Not going to elaborate. Nope.
Q: Will there be a weapon as satisfying as the *Doom* super shotgun?
A: Wait and see.
Q: Will *Quake* be a *Doom*-like slugfest or will you be harder to kill than just one blast?
A: Come on. Do you want to wait to kill someone by pounding on them with a stick for a while... or do you want to shove a *shotgun* under their chin and watch their brains hit the ceiling?! Slugfest.

Telling, very telling.

DeathMatch...

Quake's multi-player set-up, however, seems firmly in place. "We have DeathMatch!" enthuses McGee. "Right now we can start up a game with 'x' number of players and run around killing each other all day long. You can leave the game, and then jump back in whenever you like (but only as long as the server is still running).

"DeathMatch right now is great, and it's going to get even better. We have found the replacement for *Doom* DeathMatch... finally."

It seems as though mouse control idiosyncrasies such as 180 degree flicks and strafe-running will be kept in "to let the keyboard lamers know the *right* way to play". There will also be more deathmatch modes such as capture the flag, and team games will be supported. Individuals will be differentiated in the game by using "different skins" which you will be able to edit "with any paint program", and, most importantly, you will be able to dismember and cut other players' heads off.

But right now iD is unsure just how many players the game will ultimately support: "We have been running some servers on a P90 and we have hooked in around nine clients without any slowdown at all. The max number is not really known yet... but I think it will be pretty high."

Overall...

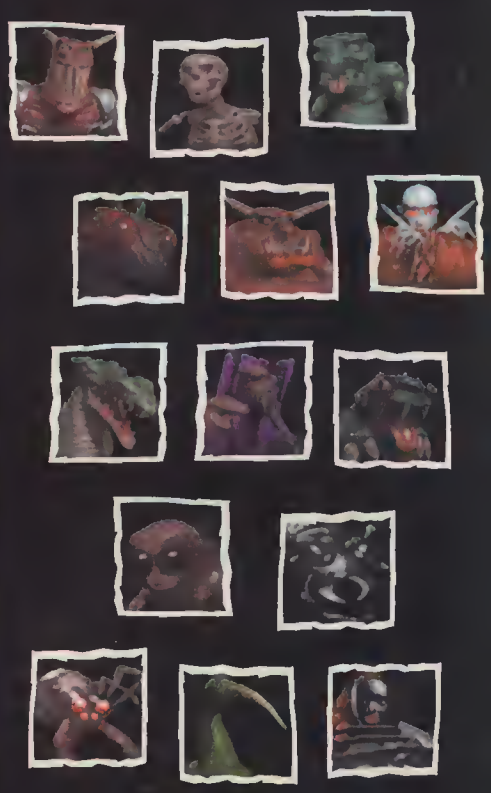
Much of what has been previously said of *Quake* will still stand. The lowest system requirement will remain a 486DX2/66 with 8MB RAM – "It does run on this, but you have to size the screen down a little bit," says McGee. "We are still working on getting the speed up, even though it is running very fast right now anyway." Graphically, most VESA resolutions are covered and hardware support for specific cards is already implemented – "You can run 640x480 at high frame rates. I mean *high* too" – and will run in 8-bit, 16-bit, and 24-bit colour resolutions. Of the new-fangled graphics cards, *Quake* will definitely support the Verite Rendition card and others "which we can't confirm right now" which will push the hi-res frame rate to "30 plus". A nine-level shareware version is also included on the card, to be released "when it's finished".

So you can all collectively breath a sigh of relief. The most eagerly awaited game of 1996 may well have been delayed, rethought, redesigned, and renamed but it still looks like it will be the *Quake* we all know and spooge over. But... we'll leave you a thought:

Q: Will the *Quake* engine be licensed for other games? Possibly a *Doom III*?
A: Of course. Spooge.

Inhabit multiple monsters.

Slaughter hero after hero.



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Dispatches

+++ Sierra signs Papyrus

Top games developer Papyrus hes been signed by US software giants Sierra On-Line.

Developer Papyrus, responsible for the classic *IndyCar Racing*, the best-selling *NASCAR Racing* end the new, improved *Indy 2* ere considered to be one of the top sports developers in the world today; the signing has been regarded es e real coup on Sierra's part, who recently signed top strategy and adventure game developers Impressions and simulation boffs SubLogic. There's no news on any new projects as yet, although both Sierra and Papyrus heve enjoyed tremendous success Stateside with their multi-player on-line games, so we could comfortably predict that they ere working on breaking into the UK along similar lines (maybe).

(Above) *IndyCar 2* – Let's hope *Indy 3* doesn't feature loads of horrible FMV.

+++ MechWarrior Matters

Activision hopes to keep the momentum going for *MechWarrior 2* with the release of several 'add-on' products for the game. First up is the *MechWarrior 2* expansion pack: *Ghost Bear's Legacy*, which has a variety of new terrains, over e dozen new mechs, new missions and a bigger selection of frightening weapons to amuse yourself with. There will also be a Windows 95 version, which will have improved graphics (the terrain won't look flat and unexciting eny more, hurrah!), better sound end *Netmech*, the network version of the game will be included in the pack. For more info contact Activision on 0181-742 9400.

+++ Bioforge Plus

Fans of top cyborg bloke Lex will be pleased to hear that developer Origin has put together a new mission disc containing extra levels for the smash hit *Bioforge*.

Although it's not available as an extra standalone disc, owners of the original game needn't worry as they can send their copy to publisher Electronic Arts along with some extra wonga and receive the all-new game which includes the extra levels.

Although rumours abound that a sequel is on the way, Origin has so far refused to release any details, though due to the open-ended nature of the plot we might expect *Bioforge 2* by the end of the year.

Contact Electronic Arts on 01753 549442 for further information.

I Spy

WILLIAM COLBY, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE CIA, AND OLEG Kalugin, former major general of the KGB, have teamed up to design *Spycraft*, a complex and realistic espionage game which lets you pretend you've just joined the CIA and gives you the awesome task of stopping an assassination attempt on a Russian Presidential candidate. You'll meet friends and enemies during your quest, you'll get to play about with incredibly expensive hi-tech equipment, and you'll even get a chance to design your own pretend person with one of those identikit things that the real police use to catch naughty people with. The game will run under Windows 95 only and we hope to review it in our next issue. For more info call Activision on 0171-742 9400.

(Right) Identikit fun in *Spycraft*.

Ice Hockey For Girls

Hyperblade is a new game in development at Activision which it claims will be the next generation *NBA Jam/Virtua Hockey*. The game allegedly combines the intensity and pace of hockey with the creativity of roller-blading and snow boarding. Players will be able to perform classic hockey moves such as checking, as well as the signature moves of in-line skaters and snow boarders. Presumably this means you will be able to give one of your opponents a right thumping and then celebrate by doing a fancy little pirouette, thus confusing the opposition completely.

Hyperblade features real-time 3D graphics, motion capture technology, a facility to create your own team and call them silly names, and of course multi-player action over a network. The game is scheduled for an April release.

For more details give Activision a call on 0181-742 9400.

Star Control Returns

Time Warner Interactive is about to release *Star Control 3*, the latest incarnation of the classic strategy game which is still revered and worshipped by PC gamers the world over. The setting for the new game is the Kessari Quadrant, a new sector in the Star Control universe. The game has 24 different animated aliens, SVGA graphics, and over a dozen new races to interact and fight with. Look out for a full review next month. For more details call Time Warner Interactive on 0171-391 4300.

Futuristic Football?

Despite what the game's title suggests, *Albion* from Blue Byte is not a multi-media encyclopaedia for people who live in West Bromwich. It is in fact a very good-looking role-playing game which puts you in the role of Tom Driscoll, the pilot of a spaceship who comes across a strange planet called Albion. *Albion* is a fairly conventional RPG which lets you control a group of heroes, all with their own characters and unique attributes, but it's the graphic style of the game that sets it apart from the competition. All the landscapes are beautifully drawn and very colourful. You play the game from three different viewpoints which change according to what you're doing at the time. A 2D display is used when you're exploring areas, so you can easily see items inside buildings. There's a 3D display for the dungeon areas which show you everything through the players' eyes. A 3D strategic battle screen is used to depict combat and the developer says that you'll have to use all your strategic skills to win the battle sequences, as opposed to simply frantically clicking everywhere on the screen.

For more details on *Albion* contact Blue Byte on 01604 232200.

Absolute Zero Update

Domark has almost finished work on *Absolute Zero*, a space combat game starring you as a galactic hero trying to save a beleaguered space colony from the onslaught of lots of nasty aliens.

The game looks like a cross between *Wing Commander* and *Elite*, except there's no trading in it. You'll get the chance to fly in seven different vehicles, and play dozens of missions choosing from seven different characters. The game has a silicon graphic interface giving you access to news reports, e-mail and diaries for all the characters. The presentation has been tarted up with the use of full-motion video sequences and "stunning Gouraud shading". We'll have a full review of the game in our next issue.

For more details contact Domark on 0181-780 2222.

Sub Ton Quad-speed

Philips is cutting the cost of its CD-ROM drives in the slack 'after Christmas' period. The new plug and play six-speed PCA62CR is easy to install and even easier to operate thanks to the new ATAP-IDE interface, and retails at around the £150 mark. Philips is also knocking out an enhanced quad-speed CD-ROM drive (the PCA52CR) for just under £100. Contact Philips on 0181-689 4444 for further details.

BMG Lost At Sea

Century Interactive is currently working on a new "arcade adventure" entitled *Bermuda Syndrome*.

Players take on the identity of Jack J Thompson, an American bomber pilot on a secret mission over the Bermuda Triangle who is stranded on a desert island after being shot down by German fighters. Trapped in an alternate dimension of time and space, Jack encounters creatures from all epochs, including dinosaurs, snake people and an underground civilisation. Armed with only a rifle and a few tools, Jack must solve numerous riddles, shoot numerous nasties and rescue the beautiful Princess Nathalia.

The action (and adventure) is spread over four different worlds (Dinosaur World, Underwater World, Cave World and The Forgotten Town), each made up of 50 levels inhabited by 50 different 3D animated enemies. It may look like just another pretty platform game, but that never stopped anyone from playing *Pitfall* or *Flashback* to death, did it? And it does feature a microscopic, scantily-clad woman, so it can't be all that bad.

Bermuda Syndrome is due for release now through BMG Interactive. For more information call 0171-384 7500.

3 malicious multiplayer modes:

Keeper *vs.* Heroes, Keeper *vs.* Keeper *and* Deathmatch.

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Grand Prix Manager - Coming Soon

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Spectrum HoloByte - MicroProse World Wide Web Site: http://www.microprose.com

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ChronoMaster

Developer Dreamforge is busy at work on a new point-and-click adventure game based on the novels of late science fiction author Roger Zelazny.

ChronoMaster is a gripping adventure set in the futuristic world of Pasqua Wipeout, a world ruled by seven pirate leaders who have created their own pocket universes. If you think that's weird, try and get your head around the rest of the plot: that's only the beginning.

Anyway, to cut a long story short, the player plays the part of Korda, an expert in pocket universes who also has in his possession a supply of bottled time that allows him to move freely between time-locked worlds (pretty convenient, eh?). The player must a) find out what the hell's going on (now that's a laugh) and b) answer lots of incredibly difficult and testing puzzles in order to return justice to the stars.

If it sounds complicated, that's because it is – very. But if you like your science fiction, and in particular the works of Roger Zelazny, you might be in for a good time. The graphics are a bit tasty too.

ChronoMaster is due for release from US Gold any time now.

Domark Lay Death Trap

Deathtrap is a new RPG game based on the "multi-million selling" Fighting Fantasy™ gamebooks by Ian Livingstone. The game features lots of characters never used before in an RPG game such as orcs, zombies, skeletal warriors, dragons and spiders. Domark says that it's tried to make the game as simple and fun to play as possible with a combat system that's fast, furious and easy to use. The game has been designed by Richard Haliwell, who wrote big sellers such as *Warhammer™* and *Space Hulk™* for Games Workshop. Domark is also working on *Terracide*, a fast action shoot 'em up that looks suspiciously like *Terminal Velocity*, but without all the fancy graphics. The general idea of the game seems to be to fight your way through lots of baddies in a spaceship, and infiltrate an enemy ship whereupon you'll be thrown into first-person hand-to-hand combat sequences. The game is being developed specifically for 3D accelerator cards so the graphics should be very fast and smooth. Look out for a full review of the game in our next issue. For more info on either of these products call Domark on 0181-780 2222.

Desktop Toys

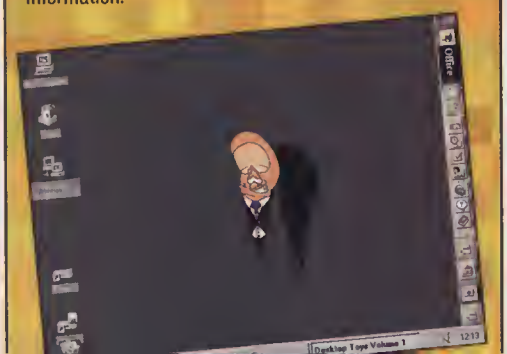
One of the most original (and amusing) CD-ROM utilities to be released of late is *Desktop Toys* from EA.

At first glance, you could be forgiven for mistakenly assuming that it's just another comedy screensaver, but instead, it's a selection of simple cartoons (or toys) which interact with documents or any other software running under Windows (either 3.1 or 95) at the click of your mouse-button.

Feeling stressed out with this month's accounts at the office? Figures just won't fit? Set Ned and Pid The Gravity Kids loose on your monitor and watch them throw molecular balls around the screen. Not tough enough? Blow massive holes in your work with a bazooka, or use the tool box to smash or saw up your screen. You'll feel better in no time.

Desk Top Toys is designed for all ages and will run on a 486/33 MHz (or higher) processor with at least 4mb of RAM. The recommended retail price is a smidgen under ten pounds, which puts it in the bargain box straightaway.

Contact EA on 01753 549442 for further information.



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Dispatches

+++ ST: Deep Space Nine
MicroProse may own the rights to produce games using the *Star Trek:TNG* license, but Viacom has the rights to the spin-off series *Deep Space Nine*, and it's already working on a new point-end-click adventure. As well as using digitised images of the actual sets that appear in the series, it features all the original cest, voices and all. You'll be able to see the fruits of its labour some time this spring.

Viecom is also working on e game of the mega-flop film *Congo*. The good news is that it's not e platform game, but a point-and-click adventure that incorporates FMV and some beeutifully rendered graphics. Nothing new there, but if evading gorillas deep in a rain forest is your thang, you'll go bananas when it's released later this year (sorry!).

+++ Realms Of The Haunting
Gremlin is confident that its super-looking spooksome blaster *The Realms Of The Haunting* will be out in April, despite rumours that the groundbreaking and graphic horror-fest is running behind schedule.

Sole programmer for the project Tony Crowther is busy incorporating all the video footage into the game as you read this, and it's already quite obvious that Gremlin will have something special on its hands, as long as the 3D engine can cope with all the extre detail of blue screen and hi-res rendered scenery.

From what we've seen so far, the game will have e minimum 15 rating, but Gremlin's hoping this won't set back the release date.

+++ Microsoft In 'Sabotage' claim
According to a recent report in the American national press, Microsoft is being investigated amid allegations that it deliberately installed glitches which would crash rival systems. American Justice Department lawyers were drafted in after thousands of Internet users worldwide installed Windows 95 onto their machines, only to find their on-line systems were disabled. Subpoenas issued to rivals CompuServe and Netscape indicate that investigators are focusing on whether the new wunder-OS and its related Internet software caused the problems deliberately or accidentally.

(Right) But will it be better than the forthcoming *Actua Soccer 2?*

Another Football Game...

As the world (well, Europe) continues to go football crazy in the build-up to the European Championships, news of yet another flash footie game breaks onto the scene.

Power Sports Soccer from Psygnosis France will be, in the words of producer Jean Baptiste, "the most accurate sim on the market". Using similar motion capture technology to the fabulous *Actua* and the not so fabulous *FIFA*, it employs an eight-camera optical system to capture the movement of three Dijon players. This info is then turned into 3D polygonned models which in turn are dressed in a series of SoftImage envelopes to give a smooth, skin-like appearance that doesn't suffer from blockiness. The results are rather impressive, as you can see from the screenshot.

As far as gameplay is concerned, the developers maintain that all the player stats, team line-ups and tactics have been thoroughly researched and then incorporated into a massive database in an effort to create an accurate and challenging opposition. They've also been working on a rather complex, though if it works, totally top AI/control system that allows you to initiate moves before the ball arrives and build up complex passing moves three or four passes in advance. Once mastered, Monsieur Baptiste reckons that this 'player anticipation' feature will translate into super smooth and flowing gameplay, and goals galore – especially once players have discovered some of the hidden 'special' moves.

Add to this a comprehensive tournament and management option, an arcade and simulation mode, up to date team selection, variable formations and tactics, a range of stadia and referees and we might just have an *Actua Soccer* beater on our hands come the Spring – if they get the control system right, that is.

Power Sports Soccer is due for release in March from Psygnosis.

And Another...

This time from Team 17 and it's a management simulation. *EuroManager 96* is about as statty as you could wish for and claims to be "the most comprehensive soccer management game ever".

Features include in excess of 500 teams spanning 16 European nations, over 12,000 players complete with detailed stats, all the national and European cups, extensive databases of every club's history and even an on-line option and play by mail facility for the terminally soccer mad. The programmers also reckon that their complex management formula incorporates the finest AI ever developed and play is based on real facts and stats as well as strategy, morale, fitness, aggression, style of play and individual player skills.

Whether *EuroManager 96* is up to the standard of the wonderful *Championship Manager 2* is a fact known only to the developers themselves, but rest assured that you will know as soon as we do.

EuroManager 96 is due for release in the spring.

Go on holiday with Chuck

The legend that is, of course Charlton 'Chuck' Heston, is ***the*** star of a new interactive Bible CD-ROM cunningly entitled *Charlton Heston's Voyage Through The Bible*, which has just been released by GT Interactive.

Let rugged Chuck guide you around some of the most prominent and sacred sites, from Damascus to Galilee, to the Desert of Sinai and back to Egypt. Chuck brings many of the hippest Bible stories to life with his powerful narration, much of which was recorded at the historic amphitheatre in Beth She'an, Israel, Chuck is accompanied by a wealth of video, music and original art, as well as some rather smart 3D rendered reconstructions of towns and buildings so you can embark on a 'virtual tour' of The Second Temple, Meggiddo and Capernaum – with Chuck.

Chuck may not be as hardened a traveller as Judith Chalmers, but he can more than hold his own when it comes to jetting about the place, topping up his tan and talking about God. And he was in *Planet of the Apes* and knows how to race a chariot – top bloke, top religious experience.

Contact GT Interactive for further details on 0171-258 3791.

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Starring:

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PC CD ROM

http://www.ea.com/origin.html

For more information about Wing Commander IV, please call 01753 546 465, email uk-support@ea.com, or write to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 835, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8XU.

ORIGIN Interactive Movie™

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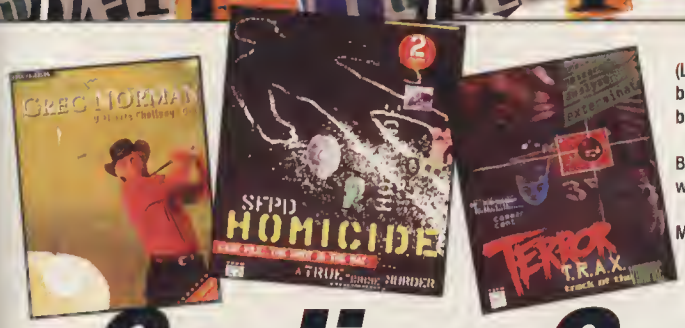


(Left to right) Greg Norman was quite good at golf, but would he lend his name to anything but a brilliant golf game for an agreed sum of money?

Be a real life 'Dick' on the streets of San Francisco without the scary nose and Michael Douglas.

More hammy acting a-plenty in *Terror T.R.A.X.*

Grolier, Golf and Dead Men's Tales

EXCELLENT NEWS FOR GAMERS – NEWCOMER GROLIER Interactive has an impressive array of products lined up for release this year.

Its newly formed 3 Prong Plug game division already has eight games in development, including a potentially top looking golf game known as *Greg Norman's Ultimate Challenge Golf*. Instead of using the normal swing power bar and click interface, shot accuracy and power is based on the user's course management decisions (?) which should prove to be an interesting change, to say the least. It also employs a "groundbreaking" graphics engine that lets you play Greg Norman's home course, the Medalist, in Hobe Sound, Florida, which the developers claim is accurate to within inches. Whether it's a match for the mighty *PGA Tour* series remains to be seen, but full marks for originality nevertheless.

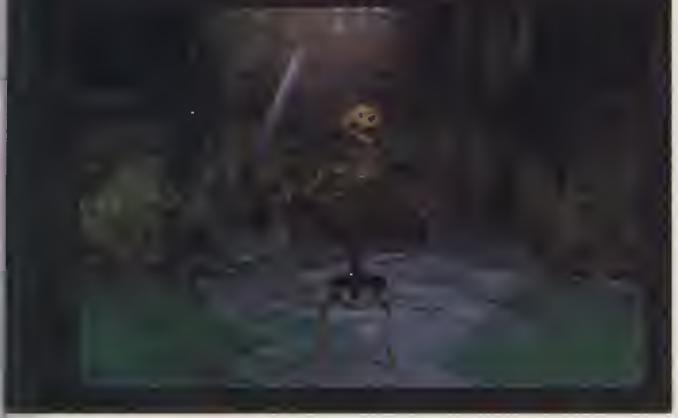
Also currently in development is an interactive CD-ROM murder mystery entitled *SFPD Homicide Case File: The Body In The Bay*, based on a real case that took place in San Francisco.

Cast in the role of rookie detective, the player must identify the body, interview suspects and witnesses, collect evidence and make a strong enough case for the DA to prosecute successfully. Produced on location in San Francisco, the game features full-motion video and dialogue from actual case transcripts and you are helped along by real life 'Dick' Frank Flazon, the real investigator who solved the case. We can only presume that the wearing of a 40-year old raincoat is optional when playing the game.

Also worthy of mention is *Terror T.R.A.X.* (Trace, Research Analyze and eXterminate) a full-screen FMV "non-linear" horror film about an elite undercover operative investigating paranormal activity. Guided by Ether, a digital ghost, the player must travel through the city searching for vampires and the undead. If previous efforts of this genre are anything to go by, the acting should be an absolute scream, as for depth of gameplay, we'll just have to wait and see. More on Grolier in next month's *PC Zone*.

Sword and Sorcery Larks from Psygnosis

Chronicles Of The Sword is a 3D adventure game being developed by Synthetic Dimensions for Psygnosis. The game is said to be faithful to the legends of King Arthur and has SVGA graphics and over 11 fully-rendered locations to explore. We'll bring you a full preview next month. Contact Psygnosis on 0151-282 3000 for more info.



Lifestyle game from Merit

Merit Studios is about to release an action-packed role-playing game called *Trial By Magic*, in which players will be able to experience familiar real life situations such as sleeping to regain their health, eating to bring their energy back, and walking all around the place just for the hell of it. You'll also get to play about with lots of spells, fight over 30 different monsties, solve "fiendish" puzzles and do all the stuff you usually do in these things. We had a quick look at it and it's shaping up nicely, and we'll be bringing you the full gen next month. Call Merit for info on 0191-460 6060.

Dispatches

+++ *Wing Commander: The Movie*

If all the rumours doing the rounds are to be believed, *Wing Commander: The Movie* has now been given the green light, and filming should start later this year.

Exactly who's starring in the film is still unclear, although presumably Mark Hamill and possibly even Malcolm McDowell will star if they can be tempted with enough cash. As far as the script and storyline goes, Chris Roberts maintained recently that he'd like to go back to the start (ie *Wing Commander*) and tell the story properly from the beginning, although other sources have indicated that the team is also considering making the movie and the next game in the series back to back to help keep production costs down. The last *Wing Commander* game cost an estimated $9 million to produce, roughly the same amount of cash as a made-for-TV movie. More information on this as we get it.

+++ *Logitech Get Control*

Still stuck for a good stick? You could do a lot worse than the Logitech WingMan Light, a two-buttoned 'entry-level' stick with contoured grip and suction cups and a new autofire switch that makes it ideal for arcade games and basic flight sims. Or there's the new ThunderPad gamepad, which features six buttons, ergonomic design and two turbo buttons – just the thing for a quick bout of *Screamer* or *FX Fighter*. Both retail for around £19.99 and are available from all the usual outlets. Contact Logitech on 01244 894300 for further details.

+++ *Boom Boom Shake The Room*

Logic 3 has just announced details of a new 100watt super-woofer set-up for around £150. The Screen8eat Super Woofer system features an advanced bi-dynamic sub bass mounting system and an ultra low Super Woofer band pass filter for deep bass response. Which basically means it's a three speaker combo and it's very loud indeed. Contact Logic 3 on 0181-900 0024 for further details.

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- Gamesmaster

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- PC Gamer

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AT HOME WITH... ZOMBIE

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

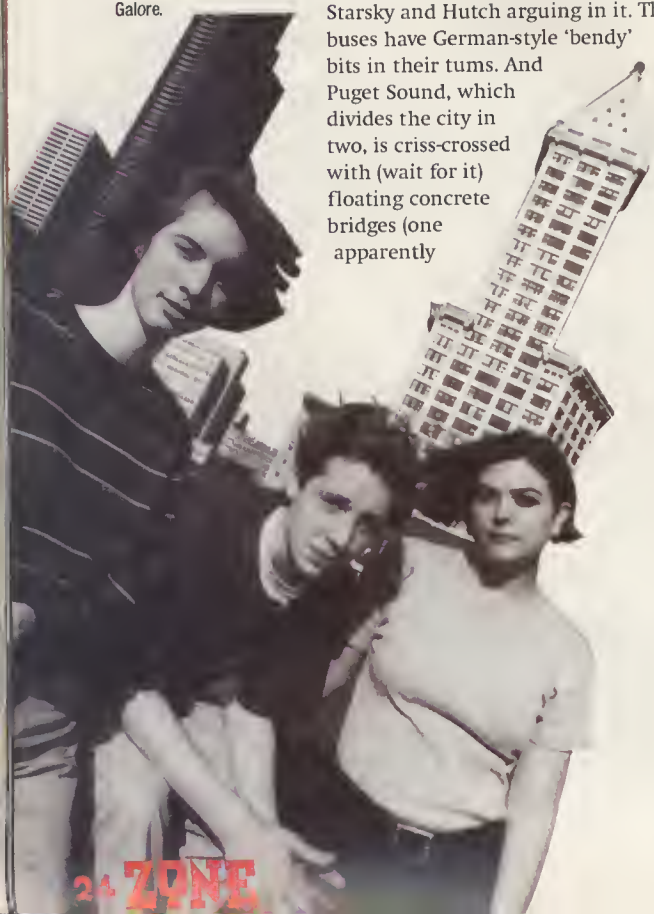
David McCandless went shopping and in his bag he ended up with: a postcard from Seattle, an inflatable prawn, a Microsoft T-shirt, a William Riker novelty mug, a jar of luma-goo, and three games from GT Interactive's latest game developer signing – Zombie.

SEATTLE. YUP, WASHINGTON STATE. Northwest America. The home of elks, Big Bill Gates, as well as cutting-edge computer companies. Silicon Valley's watery cousin. The very epicentre of all things Microsoft, Boeing and, of course, Grungey.

Some things which typify Seattle:

1) Fish
2) Microsoft
3) Taxi drivers who have never even heard of Microsoft
4) Fish restaurants

Every car looks like it should have Starsky and Hutch arguing in it. The buses have German-style 'bendy' bits in their tums. And Puget Sound, which divides the city in two, is criss-crossed with (wait for it) floating concrete bridges (one apparently sank recently when it rained a lot). This doesn't make us especially comfortable as the *PC Zone* mobile cruises across the sound, heading toward Pioneer Square and the home of up 'n' coming game developer, Zombie.



(Below) The *Locus* design bods: Christine McGavran, Mike Dussault and Janet Galore.

I Eat Your Skin

"I found that a really good way of winning arguments was to challenge your opponent to an arm-wrestling contest. Once you've challenged a guy to arm-wrestle he's already lost – if he says no, he's the biggest jerk in the world. If he says yes and I beat him, he's going to have to go home and shoot himself. If he beats me, what did he expect? I'm a girl."

So says Joanna Alexander who, along with Mark Long, started Zombie in early 1994. Before turning to the wonderful, wacky world of games, the duo spent 12 years working on high-end VR military simulations – "the world's largest computer game" – right from the days when US Navy Pilots trained on 'Pong'.

"The graphics still aren't really that advanced," continues Ms Alexander. "We had a project with the Advanced Research Projects Agency to develop a virtual reality debriefing environment for pilots who were learning air-to-air combat skills. So we developed flight recorders to monitor individual pilots' performances and to then play them back afterwards, from various angles. We started off working in four-colour vector graphics and then graduated in shaded polygons."

As they went on to develop a similar system for Apache pilots, it suddenly occurred to them that their simulation, networking and graphics experience would probably not be unhandy in the blossoming world of multimedia and computer entertainment. And they "like the lifestyle".

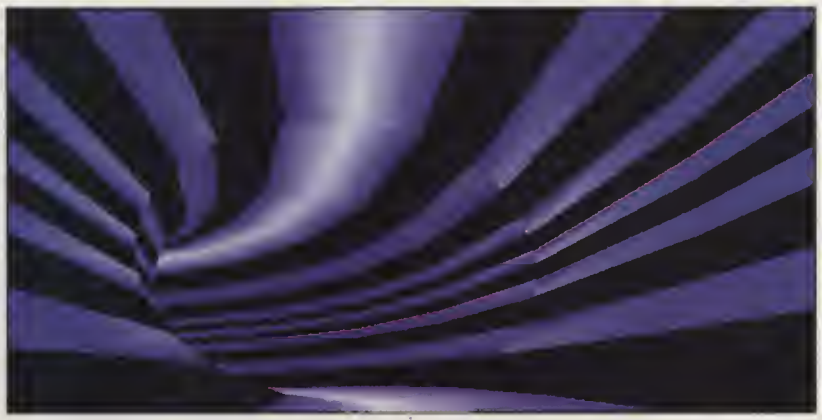
So it was that Zombie was set up in the airy environs of Seattle. Its enviable double-whammy of having two of the most experienced VR 'people' around, and of course the not-inconsiderable backing of N J Nicolas, former co-CEO of Time Warner, quickly gained the attention of GT Interactive, distributors of *Doom*, who snaffled them up pronto.

Now as 1996 starts and Nostradamus' predictions for the apocalypse come closer and closer, Zombie is releasing its first few games – *Locus, Ice and Fire*, and *Zero Population Growth* – mixing and matching Long and Alexander's VR and network prowess alongside talent from Seattle's home-grown collection of designers, graphic artists, and coders.

Ice and Fire

"A giant game of *Concentration* combined with an action game," is the way Long describes *Ice and Fire*, a title co-conceived by Zombie's in-house gurus and Alexey Pajitnov and Vladimir Pokhilko, the two Russian geniuses responsible for *Tetris*, and therefore the near fall of Western civilisation as we know it.

So what's the plot? Well, a group of human explorers have colonised an asteroid in deep space. After months of glorious zero-gravity sex and rock-climbing, the colonists are suddenly and viciously attacked by swarms of mysterious aliens. Backed into a corner and facing certain death, the colony's leader decides to deep freeze the entire asteroid, cyrogenically suspending the humans and aliens side by side. Years later, you – the heroic rescuer – arrive to defrost the station, giving the colonists salvations, and handing out your own special brand of red-hot lead 'presents' to the aliens. You have two main weapons – surprisingly enough, ice and fire - one for thawing, and one for re-thawing should you accidentally melt a rather large and hungry monstie free. The trick, as you explore the multi-tiered *Wolfenstein*-esque 3D environment, is to remember which



(Above) As you'd expect all of the games have the obligatory rendered cut scenes and stuff. Novel, huh?

(Left) Well... this is Locus, and er, it's got a big long stripey tunnel thing in it. Anyway, we'll find out just what it is next month, 'cause all being well we're supposed to get a copy in for review. Hoorah.

of the blocks of ice contain colonists and which contain horrible house-sized monsters. So, when you return later with house-sized hardware, you can ionise the correct ice-cube and avoid toasting shivery innocents.

Of course each level is a scary labyrinth, chocka with keys, switch puzzles, logic bombs, architectural conundrums, and other 'environmental hazards'. And before you can even land, you have to scour the asteroid for likely landing colony, bringing in a 3D-rendering sub-game-on-rails where you swish around mountainous outsidey bits, following flight paths and skirting cul-de-sacs.

With the creators of *Tetris* behind the wheel, and with quite the spiffiest rendered cut scenes we've ever seen, *Ice and Fire* is bound to attract attention. "It has the two things that make *Tetris* so addictive – the feeling of action and the visible time pressure," explains Pokhilko. "Plus the element of saving people, rather than just killing aliens."

Locus

The idea for 'virtual reality sports game' *Locus* is not dissimilar to 'soccer' (as our American cousins are fond of calling it).
Each player has a goal, and must shoot the ball into an opponent's portal, while trying to protect their own. Similarities to football, however, hereby end. Each player flies an armoured hovercycle around spherical metal arenas of varying complexity and shape. The ships shriek along the base of stadium, whomp up the sides, or soar right across the ceiling, attacking equally ballistic foes from all directions. It is somewhat 'hyper-kenetic'.

The whole game, with its 360 degree panorama and polygon graphics tarted up with a few careful dabs of 'Gouraud' shading, has been designed with multi-playing and 3D VR headsets in mind. Players will head mounted displays like Forte's VFX-1 have access to an instant padlock view. They can snap a glance behind them, look up at the ceiling, or check for opponents beneath their ships – and respond to clues and noises in the 3D 'sonic cathedral of audio' that is the game's sound effects. Headsets which will be supported include VFX-1, CyberMaxx, i-glasses!, and 7th Sense.

And on the multi-player side, *Locus* supports just about every standard out there: IPX network, TCP/IP (which is the Internet protocol), serial, modem, and of course, two paper cups tied together with a piece of string (which is handy if you're skint). Plural player games can be in co-operative teams (what wusses) or in solitary, hovercycle-eat-hovercycle deathmatches.

"Three years from now virtual reality will be a very strong niche," explains Long. "We're not just designing for the technology that's available today. The current peripherals you see out on the market will shake out. As well as being cheaper they will be better. Owning a Virtual Reality headset will be like having a good joystick."

(Far left) Feast your eyes on what you can expect from *Locus*.

Zero Population Growth

Possibly the most innovative game in Zombie's portfolio (ie the one which you can't say looks like blee or blah) is undoubtedly *Zero Population Growth*. The story isn't particularly unusual – Orwellian style government creates a race of superhumans to police their oppressed people, one grows too powerful, escapes, and becomes some kind of anti-heroic superman. But the graphics, look, and style of the game are something else. Penned (literally) by British ex-MTV animator Aidan Hughes, the graphics are in a weird monochrome woodcut finish with splashes or red, warped with disturbing perspective and deep shadows - more like a *2000AD* strip than a game.

The game had just been started at the time of our visit, so details are still a little hazy. "It will be a very violent action game, with a nightmarish sound track to match the visuals, and the customary network play and support for VR headsets," says Alexander. *ZPG* is set to include guns (cool), timed grenades (cool), psionic power (possibly cool), stealth (for wusses), and brutality (For Men), plus huge 3D city states, pneumatic subways, peddle-powered Zeppelins, war monsters, and a menagerie of shape-shifting aliens. Z

(Above and right) It looks like the *Zero Population Growth* muthas could show the *PC Zone* team a thing or two (and we're well 'ard)...

Contact details

Web: http://www.zombie.com
GT Interactive: 0171-258 3791
Release dates: *Locus* and *Ice and Fire* out now, *Zero Population Growth* out mid 96

GRAND *prix* 2

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Ten runners-up will receive a beautifully packaged (ie boxed) copy of the definitive pinball game for the PC – the fabulous *Pro Pinball: The Web* courtesy of Empire Interactive. Wow!

1 What kind of creature was '60s TV superstar Flipper?

☐ A sea lion ☐ A pinball table ☐ A dolphin ☐ Dolph Lundgren

2 What is the French word for a pinball table?

☐ Le flipper ☐ Le joue d'arcade ☐ Le game de video ☐ Joue Le Taxi

3 Which band wrote a rock opera about a pinball wizard?

☐ The Who ☐ Dr Who ☐ Who cares ☐ Elton John

4 Who was the deaf, dumb and blind hero of the aforementioned epic?

☐ Tommy ☐ Nobby ☐ Mr Blobby ☐ Shane Ritchie

Cut out and send this coupon to PC Zone
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London W1P 7HJ
to reach us by 1 March 1996.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

All usual restrictions apply. No cash for prizes option. Nothing for a pair either – not in this game! So there!

As you've probably heard, Bullfrog is currently working on a rather snazzy superhero game. Seeing as it looks so damn impressive we'll be bringing you a monthly 'diary' that tracks the progress of the game as it's developed. Sean Cooper, the Producer on the project, will be bringing us monthly reports. So here goes...

DIARY

Part One

Indestructibles

INDESTRUCTIBLES IS THE ARCADE strategy game I'm working on at present. I have very strong views as to exactly what I want the finished product to be like, as well as wanting to do it in my own way without being influenced by anything else. In fact, before I go on I want to make it clear from the outset that nothing like it has ever been done before. *Spiderman, Batman, X-Men, Captain America* – even *Darkman* (!) – be warned, all will cower in the shadow of *Indestructibles*.

I had the same plan for *Magic Carpet*, the last game I worked on. I wanted to make it completely different to anything that anyone had seen before. I think we succeeded, partly because we included obscure concepts such as Mana Balls. Best described as a form of currency, you can possess and collect Mana Balls in the same way as ordinary money. They're a little bit crazy *(And Manna is spelt wrong, just to confuse journalists – Ed.)* but they contribute to the games' many unique elements.

Batman for real?

So on to *Indestructibles*, then. In terms of game structure, you could probably best compare it to *Batman;* you can imagine a phone ringing (like Commissioner Gordon's) and someone saying: "We've got a problem." And if you don't fix that problem, the public quickly turns on you, calls you a fraud and a wimp, and you suddenly find yourself stripped of your superhero status!

In *Indestructibles* you start off with either a single superhero, or a team of *X-Men* or *Fantastic Four* type do-gooders. And as well as physically designing your ideal character, you can define your abilities; for example, my ideal superhero would be agile and fit, especially good at climbing and flying, and able to transform herself into a cheetah. Yes, that's right – given the choice I'd opt to be a woman. Why? Well, it's simple enough – although they're weaker they're more flexible, which means that if they beat, say, a man that's a lot stronger, the sense of achievement is that much greater.

With your superhero you can do almost anything, as long as you have the power: devastate a city, kill anyone, destroy anything. The whole game needs to be both flexible and organic, but the freedom to express your super powers in whatever way you see fit is the single most important element.

Unlike most superheroes though, you can choose to be either good or evil. You decide which way you lean at the beginning of the game, and then you learn that you can earn funding from different organisations (superheroes need sponds too, you know). If you're a goody-goody you could well earn funding from the government, say, to become a 'Defender of the World', or alternatively you could opt to become a mercenary, working with whoever pays the most cash. Whatever you do, if you are successful you can earn more money, which you can then utilise to research and develop faster and stronger superheroes or more effective weaponry.

It's got looks

The game was originally to take place in a dark, futuristic setting, but having already worked with this, I've come to the conclusion that a brighter, more colourful environment for day, with a dull monochrome look for night, is more appropriate. It's very important to incorporate the latter setting because lighting and shadow is an excellent means of building atmosphere; again, I don't want *Indestructibles* to resemble anything else, and every other game

(Right) You're just going to have to wait and see if *The Indestructibles* really are indestructible...

that comes out now seems to be dark and gloomy. I still reckon it'll be a lot of fun to do it in a *Spiderman*-style colourful environment.

To give you an idea of the characters, there will be vector-based people for your teams, a mixture of sprites for civilians, and vector cars. There are several advantages to be gained using vectors: firstly they allow increasingly flexible characters, which can stretch and morph into different shapes and creatures; they also save on memory, which is useful as *Indestructibles* is being simultaneously developed for the PlayStation and Saturn consoles.

At present we're a couple of months away from a product that, as well as being fast and playable, really looks like a game. I have to say that my favourite part of any project has to be when lots of things have been implemented and are actually working, because by that stage you know what the game engine is capable of, and the graphics and mechanics are there; this means that the next step is to build up the intricate bits of the gameplay. For now, though, it's early days for *Indestructibles*, which means that we're still playing around with everything, so of course the game's changing every day.

Bullfrog is a very team-orientated company, so although I'm the Producer of *Indestructibles*, I try to always take my team's views and thoughts into account. I get lots of ideas from what people say – it's often the case that it's the really annoying little gits who come up with the most useful suggestions, simply because everyone then starts talking about them and discussing what they said. As team leader it's important to get my views across, but sometimes I have to compromise and go with the majority decision; I must admit though, it's not always easy! To give you an example, I didn't want the castle to be included in *Magic Carpet* because in my opinion it spoiled the original multi-player aspect; but majority rule won the day, and the castle went in.

Incidentally, the multi-player aspect is the most important part of any game I'm involved in, so I'm working hard to make *Indestructibles* the most impressive multi-player game yet. I'd like to support the new BT Wireplay multi-player network, and also the Internet as a global gaming network – but as all that's going to be some time in the future, I'm now concentrating on producing the game itself.

Next month we'll concentrate more on the development of the game itself, exactly who is doing what, and hopefully we'll have some up-to-date graphics to show you. Until then, see ya! **Z**

(Above and below) Don't be put off by the naff Freddie Mercury lookalike above – the rest of *Indestructibles* looks great.

Meet the Team

Like all Bullfrog projects, *Indestructibles* has its own team:

Sean Cooper (me): I was responsible for the programming on *Syndicate*, and also for the *American Revolt* data disk; I also programmed and produced *Magic Carpet*, *Hidden Worlds* and *Hi-Octane*, as well as producing *Magic Carpet 2*. Influences from all of these titles will be apparent in *Indestructibles*, which is perhaps the reason why, personally, I like to think that my projects are constantly improving. For me, gameplay is everything – I wouldn't be too concerned if the game looked shoddy (although it won't, of course, right Fin?). Seriously though, to my mind graphics are much more of a marketing ploy – after all, it's how a product plays that captures people and draws them in to a great game.

Also helping out with the programming on *Indestructibles* are:

Andy Cakebread: an interesting guy with plenty of good ideas (although he's still learning how to apply them). He has recently moved away from testing and into programming – he's got a lot of potential, even if he sometimes takes a long-winded route to get what he wants. We'll soon knock him into shape!

Ken Chan: a new addition to Bullfrog. As he's Chinese, I guess we now have a multi-national team. Having recently left Cambridge University, Ken now has a promising future as a programmer; he recently programmed the *Hi-Octane* data disk revision.

And the graphics team:

Fin McGechie: Fin previously worked with me as lead artist on *Magic Carpet*, and he's got a lot of artwork experience. We work well together – okay, he can be a bit difficult at times, but hey, so can everyone.

Eoin Rogan: he's very Irish (hence the name, pronounced 'Owen', incidentally), and worked on *Magic Carpet* before becoming the *Magic Carpet 2* lead artist.

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IN PRODUCTION

Rayman

Jeremy Wells was unable to attend the preview of the new non-linear platform game *Rayman* due to slight mental illness, so he sent his little brother, Jeremy Jnr, instead. Well, that's what he told us, anyway.

AT THE WEEKEND I WENT TO MY friend Keith's for tea and played *Rayman* on his Sony PlayStation and ate lots of jelly and Keith was sick on the dog. I got the Rayman to jump in the air and collect the blue things and set the little creatures free out of the cages, but Keith said I wasn't very good 'cos I kept falling in the water and Rayman was dead. But not really 'cos he has five lives and comes back when he dies, which is nice 'cos then you can have another go and another go until your fingers hurt or Keith gets bored and steals the control thingy.

He did that a lot when I did better than him and he wouldn't let me play so I hit him, and he cried. Then we had some more jelly and Keith got some up his nose and then he didn't feel well again so he let me play some more and I didn't felled in the water once and got through to the next land which was the same but different and I died.

Keith was laughing at me so I wanted to go upstairs to his sister's room and look at the letters from her boyfriend and copy out the rude words, but Keith said that if his Mummy caught us, Keith would have to stay in his room and he wouldn't get any pocket money for a million years and she would take away the *Rayman* game. I said that didn't matter because we could play *Aladdin* round my house on my Daddy's PC, but Keith said that it wasn't as good 'cos *Rayman* has more levels, more colours, more characters, and is miles, miles better. He said that it only took him two days to finish *Aladdin* round his friend Jeffrey's house, and he's been playing *Rayman* for weeks on his PlayStation and he'd only got to the bit after the Band Land bit and that it was really hard.

(Above) Look at all the lovely colours! Never has a platform game sported such big and juicy sprites.

(Above right) *Rayman* has six different worlds, nearly 70 different levels and over 50 different characters – it's just so big!

(Below) So how does it compare to the PlayStation version? Well, if anything, it looks and moves even better! It's certainly faster! Gosh!

(Right) It's non-linear? How can that be? All platform games are linear unless you can go back and do certain bits all over again in case you missed something – wow, that's so crazy!

Game over, Aladdin

I called him a liar because it took me a whole week to finish *Aladdin* so he must have cheated. He pulled my hair and I cried and I went to find my Daddy in the kitchen but he wasn't there so I went upstairs and I was frightened 'cos I could hear my Daddy moaning and I thought he was hurted. I sat on the stairs 'til it was quiet and then runned in and my Daddy was in there with Keith's Mummy and they were both poorly because they were both in bed. Daddy shouted at me to go downstairs, but I cried and said I'd tell Mummy. He said he wasn't feeling well so Keith's Mummy said he should lie down and that she would be nursey for him and that I didn't have to tell Mummy and that it could be our special secret.

Product details

Developer: UBI Studios
Publisher: UbiSoft
Telephone: 0181-941 4004
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: February

On the way home Daddy bought me lots of sweets and said he'd let me play on his PC when we got home. I said I didn't want to play *Aladdin* any more, I wanted to play *Rayman*. So we went to the computer shop but the man said that it wasn't in the shops yet and I would have to wait. Daddy got angry and we had to leave the shop because the man said he'd call the police if we didn't. I started to cry and said I wanted to go back to Keith's house and play *Rayman*, but Daddy said that we had to go home now 'cos Mummy would be worried, but I could go and see Keith again tomorrow if I was good and didn't tell no one nuffink. I said I'd like that and Daddy said he would like it too. Z

(Jeremy Wells Jnr, aged 5[3/4])

Gabriel Knight 2:

It's got photo-realistic backgrounds and characters, the coolest interface yet seen in an adventure game, it's scarier than Chris Anderson (blimey!), but best of all, it's almost here. Swept along by a fanfare of trumpets, *Gabriel Knight 2* finally breezes into the *Zone* office.

(Right) it's Gabriel, innit?

THE TERM 'EAGERLY AWAITED' IS often used by journalists when they are either being too lazy or they're just too plain stumped to dream up an alternative description for a big release. For once however, we have a game that justifies such an expression.

Journalists and punters alike harbour a special place in their hearts for the original *Gabriel Knight* adventure. The plot was gripping, and although from a technical viewpoint the graphics were not particularly impressive, they still had character and charm, while the talented Tim Curry's voiceover for the main character was both brilliantly delivered and highly appropriate.

So bearing all this in mind, what could we realistically expect from the sequel? Well, the graphics are digitised rather than hand-painted, with the result that they are certainly more impressive than those in the original, although whether or not they're as captivating is open to debate. Basically, we're back to the old argument that interactive movies on the PC are killing the worthy and addictive adventure games. However, to assume that *Gabriel Knight 2* will offer nothing more than tons of FMV clips would be wholly premature and would only do the game an injustice. Having played a beta version of it, you can all rest assured that there really is a good solid game experience to be had – it has genuine puzzles and offers true interaction with the gaming environment. You'll find that most of the characters from the previous outing reappear in the sequel, although obviously they look a little different this time round because they are now portrayed by real actors.

The new Gabriel is fairly convincing in the lead role, as is his sidekick Grace, and the storyline (which continues from where the first game left off) should offer some compensation to those who enjoyed the original and are hankering after a further slice, regardless of the new photo-realistic sets.

As with its predecessor, *Gabriel 2* is played out over a series of chapters, and the player has to solve all the puzzles in a particular chapter before progressing to the next one. However, this approach invariably works better in some games than others – take *Phantasmagoria* for example, which was so short and easy to complete that as soon as you got into a chapter you had to stop and slap in another CD before accessing the next stage. Boresville! *Under A Killing Moon* also had chapter-based gameplay, but it handled it a lot better; because there was plenty for you to do in all of the different chapters, you felt you'd spent enough time in each one before moving on to the next section.

Of all the games that use chapters to separate the gameplay, *Gabriel Knight 1* was undoubtedly the best. Whether this will prove to be the case with the sequel still remains to be seen, but from the tantalising glimpses we've had so far, things do indeed look promising.

(Right) This is Grace. Gabriel has the hots for her, but so far she just ain't interested.

The Beast Within

(Left) The woodland surrounding Gabriel's house contains hidden objects that come in extremely useful.

Sierra has spared no expense on the game's presentation, drafting in Hollywood director Will Binder to shoot the movie scenes, and creating over 1000 photo-realistic backgrounds for ultra-realism. And the interface has been improved too: in the first game it was sometimes difficult to pin-point crucial objects, or to get Gabriel to follow your instructions. All this has been sorted out and interacting with the game is as simple as it should be. Also, there's no repeat of the original's crap arcade sequence where you had to get past several mummies while simultaneously fighting with the interface.

Without wanting to tempt fate, it looks as though *Gabriel Knight 2* will live up to all expectations. It should be out by the time you read this, but I'd still recommend you hang fire until you've seen our review in the next issue before parting with any cash. Time will tell!

Storybook: Part 1

The first game introduces the character of Gabriel Knight, a failed horror writer who is also the proprietor of an equally unsuccessful book shop. Gabriel has an unhealthy interest in all things occult, and it's this that leads him into trouble. He discovers that a series of killings in his home town of New Orleans have been linked with a mysterious voodoo cult, and with the help of his assistant Grace he decides to investigate. Spurred by a call from a man claiming to be his long-lost great uncle, Gabriel flies over to Germany and discovers that various members of his dear family have been Schattenjagers (witch hunters).

It transpires that he is the last in the line and he is duly initiated – and as a Schattenjager Gabriel then takes on and defeats the voodoo activists. The game ends with Gabriel and Grace reflecting on all that has happened (at this point everyone expects the mismatched pair, who have been at each other's throats constantly, to fall in love and give the story a yeuchy sickly ending. Thankfully it doesn't happen).

Part 2

At the start of the second game, Gabriel is contacted at his German residence by a group of villagers who want him to go and track down a werewolf in Munich. Gabriel jets off and on his arrival learns of a spate of serial killings – the police are under the mistaken impression that the culprits are wolves on the run from the Munich zoo. Gabriel's heroic quest to track down the evil killer inevitably involves him in all sorts of shady goings-on, and he uncovers links between previous Schattenjagers who have gone into battle with supposed werewolves.

To reveal more about the plot would obviously be giving too much away, but romanticists among you (er, if there are any, that is) will no doubt be pleased to learn that the love story involving our hero Gabriel and Grace (hinted at in the first game) reignites in the sequel. So there you have it – no more voodoo stuff but lots of spooky werewolf-type action to get your teeth into. Z

Product details

Developer: Sierra
Publisher: Sierra
Telephone: 01734 303322
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: February

(Below left) Ah, this will be a spooky old house, no doubt.

(Below) Grace meets Gerde, a rival for Gabriel's affection.

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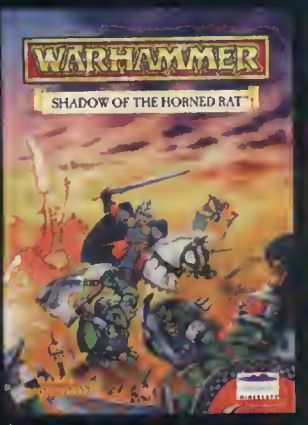

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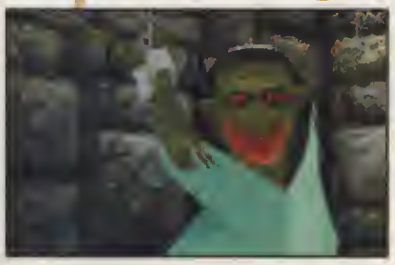
Jeremy Wells quite liked being 'Alone In The Dark', until we told him that there's a risk of getting warts or even going blind if you do it by yourself for long periods.

Time Gate: Chapter 1



(Above) *Time Gate's* characters really are a huge improvement over those in *AITD* – they are drawn as black and white model sheets, and then coloured to prepare the modelling and mapping. Once they're modelled and mapped, the characters are able to display approximately 1000 animations.

(Above left) Remember kids, look out for nasty armoured thugs when you're busy studying...

(Above far left) It's no wonder that horrible creature's chained up!

As far as 3D polygonned, walkie-talkie adventures are concerned, Frenchies Infogrames have lead the way, producing not just one but three corkingly super and highly playable gems. And, more importantly, they were the first. Fellow Frenchies Delphine tried extremely hard with *Fade To Black*, Electronic Arts compatriots Origin put in a bid with the technically exquisite *BioForge*, and Andrew Spencer's tasty, but too damn short *Ecstatica* was, well, too short really. So far no other developer has managed to surpass the first effort in terms of sheer originality and 'oomph' factor. If *Doom* inspired people to buy PCs, then the *Alone* series persuaded them to hang onto them and impress their friends.

So what do Infogrames go and do after releasing the third fabulous instalment in the *AITD* series? Do they smartly leak the fact that they are currently working on a fourth exciting and technically top sequel? Do they heck. They say, that's it (or *C'ést tout* probably) and start working on something else. The fools!

And now for something almost completely different

So what on earth's going on? Why have Infogrames dropped one of the most successful series of games ever created like the butt of a smoked Gitane ? Have they all gone mad?

Well, no – not yet, anyway. If I were to be brutally honest (yes, you have put on weight, actually you do look fat in that dress, buy a hat, your new haircut looks bloody terrible!), *Time Gate* isn't exactly a million miles (or kilometres for that matter) away from the *Alone In The Dark* series. In fact it's very similar to *AITD* – and I mean very. If you didn't know otherwise, you'd quite possibly bet your last £34.99 that it was *Alone 4*, but then you'd be penniless with no hope of buying the new *AITD* compilation pack that glows in the dark. Shame. Brutal, even. But hey, that's life in the '90s.

Anyway, let's get back to *Time Gate*. Like *AITD*, it's a trilogy, and this is the first instalment (if the impressive intro is anything to go by, the other two parts could quite possibly be set in Victorian times and the First World War – but then again they're not due for release for eons yet). The player 'plays' the part of William Tibbs, a young (and trendy, check out those sideburns) American law student studying in Paris. William is fairly sick with worry (not to mention gagging for it) 'cos his girlfriend Juliette has mysteriously disappeared from the Museum of the History and Tradition of the Middle Ages, where she works as a trainee archaeologist.

One night, while busy studying hard in his bedroom like all good young men should, a man wearing some sort of mediaeval armour crashes through his window and challenges young Wills to a 'final' combat. It turns out that the nasty chap isn't, as Wills thought, from the Parisian Mediaeval Pizza Delivery Co at all, but from the depths of the past. He's called Wolfram 'The Red Haired Fox' (apparently) and the evil swine is holding poor Juliette captive in a secret room in the Museum. After a bout of fisticuffs, Wolfie disappears and William is left more than a little perplexed: who the bloody hell was that weirdy beardy bloke in the ancient clobber, and why on earth has he gone and kidnapped his chick? And where's that pizza he ordered hours ago? »

(Left) *Time Gate* uses a new 3D mapper (developed in-house) which handles all the light sourcing, texture mapping and Gouraud shading on all objects and characters.

(Right) They've even included three difficulty levels for those wusses who find it too hard.

IN PRODUCTION

Product details

Developer: In-house
Publisher: Infogrames
Telephone: 0181-738 8199
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: March

(Right) The interface has been tidied up for ease of use and better combat. You can now block and fend off blows instead of being butchered.

Who/What was the Knights Templar?

The Order of the Poor Knights of Christ, also known as the Knights Templar, was created by a handful of Christian knights who hailed from various backgrounds. Their primary mission was to defend the roads used by pilgrims making the journey from Europe to Christ's tomb in Palestine from marauding Ottoman troops.

The Order lived by a strict rule drawn up by Saint Bernard and the highest authorities of the Western church, which basically decreed: live poorly, offer one's life and goods to the Order, for God and the defence of the Holy Sepulchre. Surprising as it may seem, many a young nobleman willingly gave up his rights and worldly possessions to wear the sign of the red cross. After just a few years, thanks to continuously swelling ranks and donations, the Order became a very rich and powerful force, accruing ownership of lands, fortresses and even entire cities that stretched from the East deep into West. What's more, thanks to Papal privileges, the Order raised taxes to line its own pockets and traded with neighbouring powers. In no time at all, the Order had established itself as a major European financial power, handling most of the trade through Europe from Palestine and vice versa.

When the Kingdom of Palestine fell, the Knights Templar were forced to retreat and were exiled from the Holy Land forever with the majority of its troops returning to France, the birthplace of the esteemed Order. This immediately upset Philip the Fair, King of France, who had borrowed huge sums from the Order and now felt threatened by the potential financial, military and political power of the Templar Knights. Worried that he would be deposed, he took advantage of some so-called revelations of a deserter from the Order who accused the Knights Templar of being heretics and adored idols. On 3 October 1307, King Philippe called for the arrest of the Order's highest members. Over the next seven years, several hundred Knights Templar were viciously burned alive at the stake or left to perish in wretched dungeons while good ol' King Philippe 'inherited' all their wealth and power, wiping out his own massive debt in the process (a good move on his part).

As soon as the last grand master of the Order had been burnt at the stake, legends about the Knights Templar started to form: weren't these monk knights powerful alchemists who could make gold appear out of nowhere? Did all their confiscated riches really end up in Philippe's coffers? Didn't the Knights leave secret esoteric messages engraved in the stones of buildings? Does the Templar Gold really exist and if it does, where is it?

The very next day young (and trendy) William hot-foots it down to *la musée* to check out what's happenin' and search for clues to Juliette's whereabouts. As luck would have it, while giving every dusty nook and cranny a once-over, he discovers that the Museum once housed the 'Commandery', the Grand Headquarters of the 'Order of the Templars', in 14th Century France. What's more, he discovers that he is the reincarnation of one of the founder members of the famous Order. Spooky or what?

During his exploration of the Museum looking for more clues, William comes across some weirdy-type blokes who overpower him and throw him down a well in the Museum grounds. As he falls down the well William passes through a 'Time Gate' and suddenly finds himself transported to the Templar's Grand Headquarters, circa 1329! It all just gets spookier and spookier, doesn't it?

And that's all I'm going to tell you at the moment, because if I ramble on any further I'll probably spoil the whole thing for you. Suffice to say *Time Gate* is a damn fine story (as was the entire *Alone In The Dark* series) and whether you're into your mediaeval history or not, it's pretty much a dead cert that you'll just lurvve it to bits.

So what *is* different?

On a technical level it's an improvement over *AITD* in that it sports fully texture-mapped Gouraud shaded characters (over 40 in fact), 3D real-time animation, 3D modelled and mapped objects, over 250 fully light-sourced sets and a real-time 'virtual' environment that carries on 'living' whether the player intervenes or not. Add to this an enhanced and even simpler user interface for movement and combat, plus the bonus of a more accessible inventory, and you're starting to talk state of the art – and that's before we've even mentioned the numerous cut scenes, realistic mediaeval art and talkie character close-up bits.

Infogrames have always been good story-tellers, and this plot of a young chap (with dodgy sideburns) travelling through time and bashing historical baddies should stand them in good stead for at least a couple more games, although they should perhaps be aware that fellow Frenchies Adeline are also thinking along the same lines with their forthcoming *Time Commando*.

Will Infogrames make it four in a row and see off the opposition yet again? Will their new technology keep them ahead? Will William ever get that pizza? We'll just have to wait and see. Z

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A hideously addictive computer game has infested the world's computers with a virus that has destroyed all power output and made all active nuclear reactors meltdown and explode. This is the Apocalypse that's the starting point for THIS MEANS WAR! MicroProse's latest all-action battle strategy game.

Played in easy-to-use Windows interface THIS MEANS WAR! has high quality 3-D isometric view graphics including the largest selection of objects to build and deploy ever seen in a game of this type. THIS MEANS WAR! is easy to control - which is just as well considering the amount of real-time action that takes place.

In the spirit of all MicroProse games there's a lot to do apart from attacking your opponent: develop your population (they start off in a tent city and progress to skyscrapers); build farms (with obligatory cow noises) to feed them; train them to be engineers, or infantry; develop a power source (windmills, oil wells or solar power),construct different grades of factories, dig mines and cart raw materials to your steel mills.

THIS MEANS WAR! has a depth of strategy not found in rival games: each one of the 40 available scenarios is like a combat puzzle - contact the enemy by sending out scouts (on motorbikes? on foot? in the air?); then - do you attack or spend your time building strong defences?

Get the logistics right and you can reduce the opposing Command Centre to rubble. Get the logistics wrong and you'll watch on helplessly as marines, heavy infantry, biker gangs, jet fighters, and hovercraft tanks tear into your HQ. We all know that 'War Is Hell' but THIS MEANS WAR! is one hell of a game.

It's toy soldiers gone ballistic (yes, you even get ICBMs to deploy!)

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HELL!

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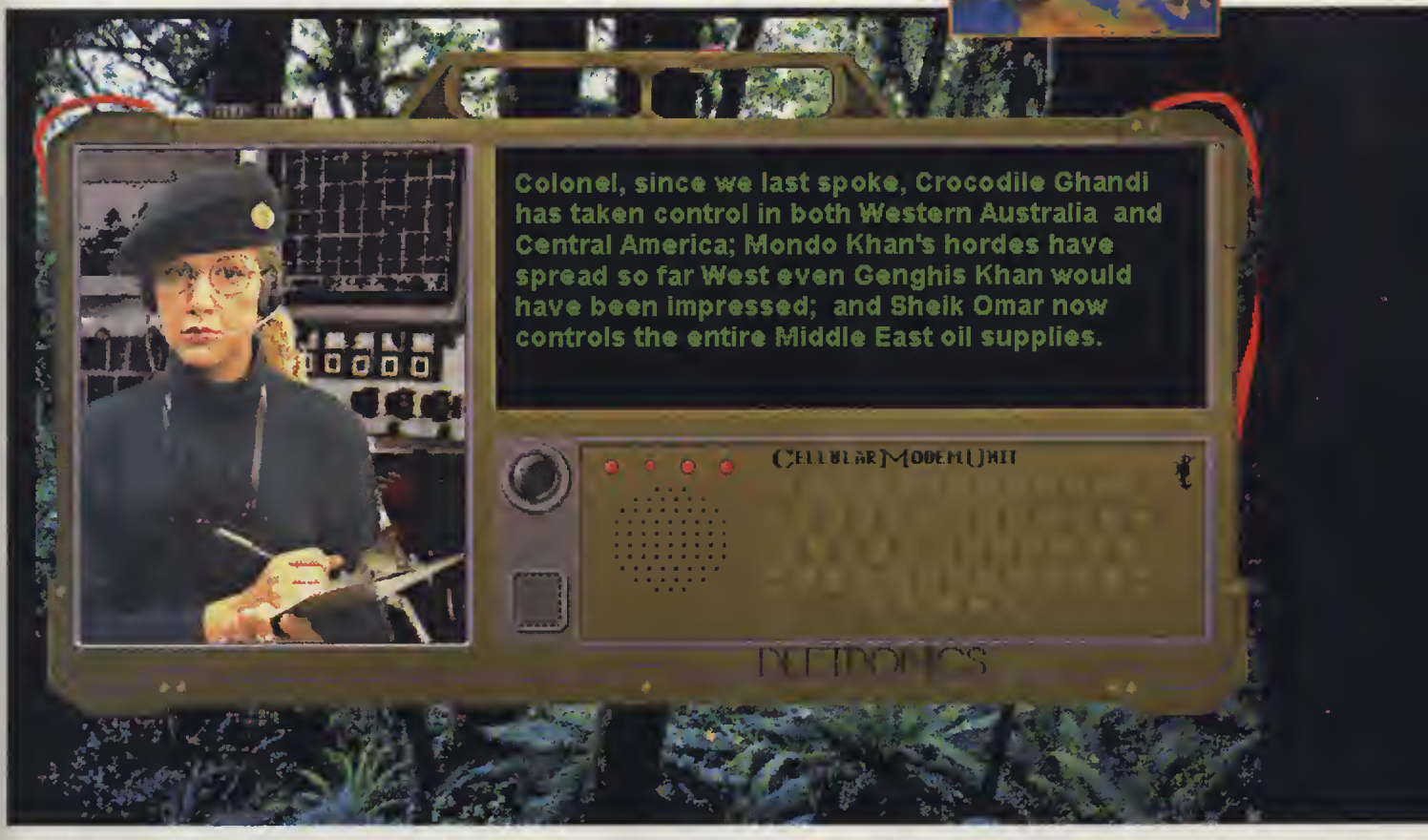

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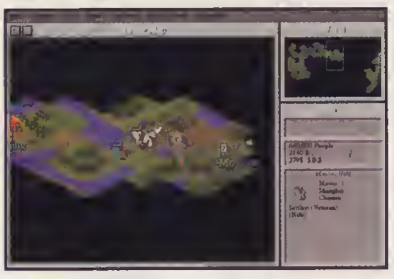
Civilization 2

Civilization is one of the PC's truly timeless games. As Sid Meier warms up his sweaty little fingers working on the sequel, we asked Pete Hawley to take a look at the progress he's making.

I KNOW PEOPLE WHO HAVE DESTROYED several relationships and wrecked marriages playing the original *Civilization*. Okay, so that's going a little too far, but you have to admit it was (and still is, come to think of it) rather good. Sid Meier is one of those people with the so-called 'Magic Touch' – and there are few developers in the industry who can claim to be blessed with the software equivalent of the Midas touch; all too often we see shelf after shelf piled high with bland copy-cat products and pale imitations.

Well, Sid's been busy at Hunt Valley in Baltimore, and what a sly devil he's been – and those chaps at MicroProse have done a splendid job of keeping the development of *Civ 2* under their hats. Originally christened with the title of *Civilization 2000*, the release date has been brought forward from summer 96 to March and the name changed to *Civilization 2* – blimey, that's original.

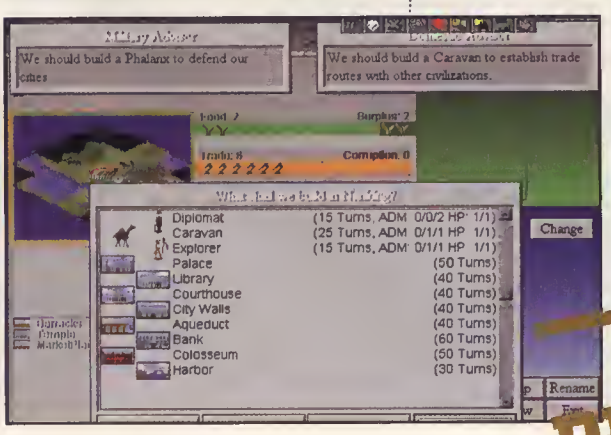
The software is already at beta stage, and even at first glance the differences are immediate and absolutely stunning. MicroProse is basically sticking to its previous successful formula, although it's improving on the longevity, detail and graphical splendour. The old game engine has been used as a foundation again (*á la Colonization*); the noticeable differences are in the front end and the decision-making aspects as your little civilisation grows.



(Left) Okay, so I've never been to Russia, but I didn't imagine it would consist of two Tudor cottages and a rose bush.

(Below) That has to be the biggest camel I've ever seen – either that or the Africans have developed an AT-AT walker.

(Right) The classic city development window has hardly changed at all, but then why fix it when it isn't broken?



What's the story, Morning Glory?

The basic story and concept will remain the same. Starting life as a wee tribe leader you must work your way up to world domination and megalomania in true *Civilization* style. Society must progress to the twentieth century and ends when man finally makes it to the stars, or when someone gets a bit silly and starts firing nuclear weapons at various countries and populations spread across the globe. "So what's the bloody difference then?" I hear you cry. Well, as far as gameplay goes, *Civ 2*'s major addition will be the ability to partake in a number of pre-set scenarios that will include World War 2, the Roman Empire, Alexander the Great plus a 'Divinity' level for experienced players; the details are sketchy at the moment but will take the player to a higher level of competition and involvement with the other civilisations.

You'll find that city development will have added improvements to aid the growth and expansion of the people, plus there'll be new sciences and technologies such as amphibious warfare, superhighways, airports and more. When your initial cities and the capital grow to become the size of London (as opposed to Scunthorpe), even more Wonders of the World can be constructed to impress your enemies and neighbours.

Blimey, doesn't it look wonderful?

The city view has changed from a bog standard pixel and expansion window to a full isometric metropolis, and can be accessed and improved at the click of a button. And the presentation when exploring the map is vastly enhanced – vivid colour, high resolution unit icons and more animations promise to bring it all to life, whereas in the past it tended to look a little flat and dull during the long periods of exploration.

Additions (too numerous to mention here) include video advisors that pop up on your Windows desktop and a fully interactive and expanding 'Civilopedia', plus better music and sound. *Civilization* still rates as one of the finest god games to this day, and with the recent release of *CivNet* to keep Sid fans happy, I'm sure *Civ 2* will prove to be yet another timeless classic that will see the demise of more marriages and the loss of many social lives. Roll on March! **Z**

Product details

Developer: Sid Meier/Hunt Valley
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 326532
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: March

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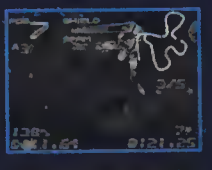

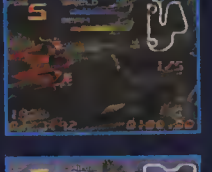

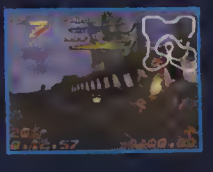

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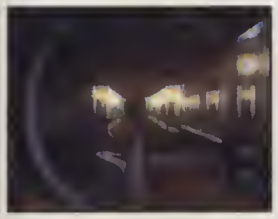


Underground train driving sim, or an account of a hard of hearing prison pop band? Patrick McCarthy isn't sure.

DefCon 5

IT'S 2204, AND WHAT'S IT TO YA? You still haven't won the lottery. The descendants of Noel Edmonds have long since been summarily hung, drawn and quartered and their horrible futuristic aluminium sweaters melted down to make designer kitchen utensils.

But neither of these facts actually have anything to do with the game. It's 2204 and, for once, the universe is calm and harmonious. War is a thing of the past, fights are distinctly passé. Even heated arguments are something no self-respecting life-form would indulge in (whispered insults, as long as they're not punctuated by any form of gesture, are just about acceptable as long as you cover your mouth with your hand). The universe is now dull, dull, dull.

Everywhere, peace reigns. Even leaves seem intrusively loud as they flutter to the ground. Corduroy trousers (of any colour), with their intrinsic capacity for aural disturbance, have been banned. Crepe-soled shoes are *de rigeur*; anyone wearing Segs is beaten in the street by the Quiet Police using the new long-handled – but foam covered – batons; Blakey possession carries a life sentence and the immediate neutering of the culprit's family. In the all-pervading calm, the crackle of a Frenchman's grime-stiffened underpants sounds like a rifle shot. *Chef* is the universal designated sitcom; *The Diaries of Ann Diamond* are studied in all schools. Crowds gather (quietly) to watch repeat episodes of *The Val Doonican Show*.

Jesus, it's quiet. If we were going to be dramatic about it, we'd pause slightly and say, "Too quiet."

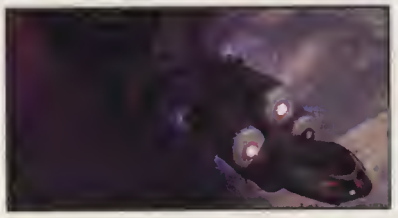
Science and capitalism

The people who are in charge at Tyron Corporation are not happy about this. They want things to generally get a bit more hectic – and not because they've a particularly high level of autonomic nervous activity and thus a greater need than most for the thrills and spills of day-to-day existence, and find that the stultifying conditions of life in 2204 are sending them out of their overactive minds with boredom, but because they are greedy bastards who just love to make obscenely enormous profits wherever possible. And the nastier the universe, the more money they stand to make: the Tyron Corporation make weapons.

Enter Shelford Pitts, a man with no future. Chief Cyberneer, First Class, at the evil Tyron Corporation's Outer Space Division, leading light of the local amateur dramatic society (his version of *Bottom* was much admired in the local press), captain of

"Everywhere, peace and quiet reigns... In the all-pervading calm, the crackle of a Frenchman's revolting grime-stained underpants sounds like a rifle shot."

(Below) Only his lightning reflexes stopped him crashing headlong into the 'In Production' sign.



(Far right) It's so cold in the Control Room that they have to resort to Calor Gas heaters.

« the darts team and – heck, why not just come right out and say it – something of a ladies' man, he might seem to have everything going for him. But he's a man with a problem: namely, that he's going to be killed off in the very first couple of minutes of the game. Check if you don't believe us – it's there in the script. So don't bother making friends with him in the bar before the start, you'll only be wasting your time.

I'm in the hoover

You're his second in command. As soon as the boy Shadwell *(Shelford – Ed.)* cops it the big bosses give you his job, which could mean you may well be on the way to sharing his fate. Anyway, off you go in the shuttle from Space 1999 to the Mining Resource Planet 6F, or MRP6F as it's known to its bedfellows. Ah, what sublimely evocative names these distant planets have – they just make you want to pack some tasty titbits for lunch, get in that interstellar craft and *travel*, don't they? It scarcely matters where, with names as beautiful as these.

Naturally, no sooner have you arrived than you're in deep shit... or, in this case, Deep Shit Nine. Your job is to complete the automation of the planet. You have 48 hours to complete the task before a ship will be coming to pick you up, and if you finish it with plenty of time to spare, according to the chirpy talking girly head who welcomes you to the base, you are free to make full use of the recreational facilities. It's all right for her, sitting across the other side of the galaxy in a position of total safety, but unfortunately for you the base in which you're trying to work seems to be under attack from a bunch of oversized cappuccino machines on legs.

Why, it looks a bit like...

So off you go, wandering around all the levels in a first-person perspective, almost *Doom*-like way. (You knew that was coming, didn't you? After all, what game isn't *Doom*-like these days?) But the wandering isn't an end in itself, it's just the way you get about within the various locations on the base, while you try to find PADs, which enable you to use stuff. And you attempt to log on to computer terminals which allow you to do things like activate the outer defence turrets to try to fend off some of the alien robot things, assign patrol routes to the internal combat droids, look at star charts and read up on the Tyron, Dinex and MXC Corporations with the on-line information system.

Don't take too long doing this, by the way, because it's one of those games where you read in real-time, and you're quite likely to be shot and killed while you're picking your way through the minutes of the last AGM.

Huge oily tubes

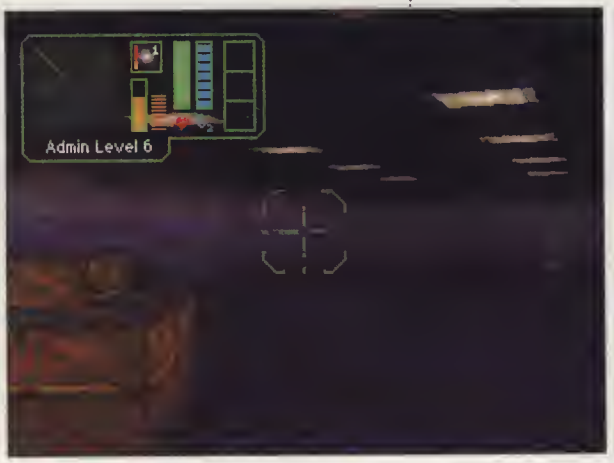
To travel between the various locations, there are 'limos' (or what seems like futuristic promotional speak for 'tube trains' to us), which trigger lengthy pre-rendered travelling sequences through tunnels to whatever location you chose when you got on the thing. It's just like being a tube driver on the Underground (except it's all a bit cleaner and there are no hopeless victims of an uncaring government throwing themselves in front of your train).

And there you more or less have it: *DefCon 5* is all about racing furiously against time, exploring, shooting stuff, catching the Tube, using droids to do all the dirty work (this is before droids got emancipation and the vote) and... er... finding the thing that will allow you to operate the base self-destruct system. Because apparently, it's the only way you're going to escape from the planet. Yes, I know they didn't tell you this at the start. But you wouldn't have taken the dead guy's job if you'd known all the facts, would you? Dummy. Z

Product details

Developer: Millennium
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171-258 3791
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: TBC

(Right) Party night at Admin Level 6.



(Far right) This is the uniquely captivating on-line Droid Systems control system.

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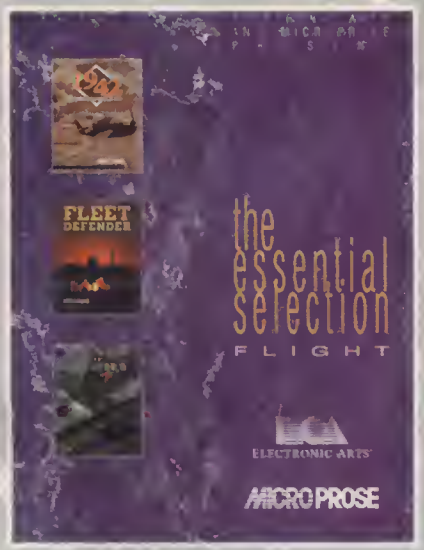
Formula One Grand Prix
86% PC Format

FIFA International Soccer
88% PC Format



FLIGHT

1942 Pacific Air War
93% PC Games

Fleet Defender
88% PC Gamer

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Looking Back

Some games are fab for a month or so, but after a while the novelty tends to wear off. This is our new bit where we take a second look at things a while after the initial review.

Hexen

Publisher: GT Interactive
Reviewed issue 33

As we pointed out in our rather fab booklet attached to the November issue, *Hexen* is easily the most effective development of the *Doom* engine so far. By blending some cool elements from the less cerebral side of role-playing with the high-speed blastarama that makes *Doom* so thrilling, *Hexen: Beyond Heretic* (to give it its full title) is one of the most playable games we've seen this year.

Having said that though... ah, there's a problem; you see, the game suffers from a few bugs which tend to trap you in certain sections of the map as well as behave in a very odd way from time to time (as our freelance art bod, David, found out when he was playing the game very late one night in the office). It's still bloody playable, but it can be a little bit temperamental as well.

On top of the erratic bug problems, unless you are an absolute Macca and know all the intricacies of *Doom* like you know the way to your own underpants drawer, it can get a bit difficult in places, especially when playing some of the ninja levels.

IndyCar 2

Publisher: VIE
Reviewed issue 34

Having spent some considerable time with *IndyCar 2* now, it has to be said that unless you're an absolute saddo IndyCar nutter, it's more than likely that it's going to completely bore you. While apparently realistic and accurate in the way it drives, it has to be said that the gameplay element of the thing is far from perfect. Call me old-fashioned, and a bit of a stiffy if you like, but racing games are much more fun if a) you feel the exhilaration of speed, and b) you can actually steer the bloody car when you come to a corner. Now I know that IndyCars are powerful brutes that really need to be driven hard, but the way the things in the game handle is probably a bit too realistic. I dunno, some people here love it, but when we displayed the thing recently on our stand at the Christmas Computer Shopper Show a lot of people became infuriated with the steering – so much so that in one case some kid twisted the control yoke that we were using on one of the machines so far that the wheel actually came off in his hand!

Personally I can completely sympathise with the poor kid, even if we did give him a beating for wrecking our gear. Duncan loved the game and declared it a classic, but as time goes on I'm finding that it's a bit annoying, and not anywhere near different enough from the original to be bothered with.

Actua Soccer

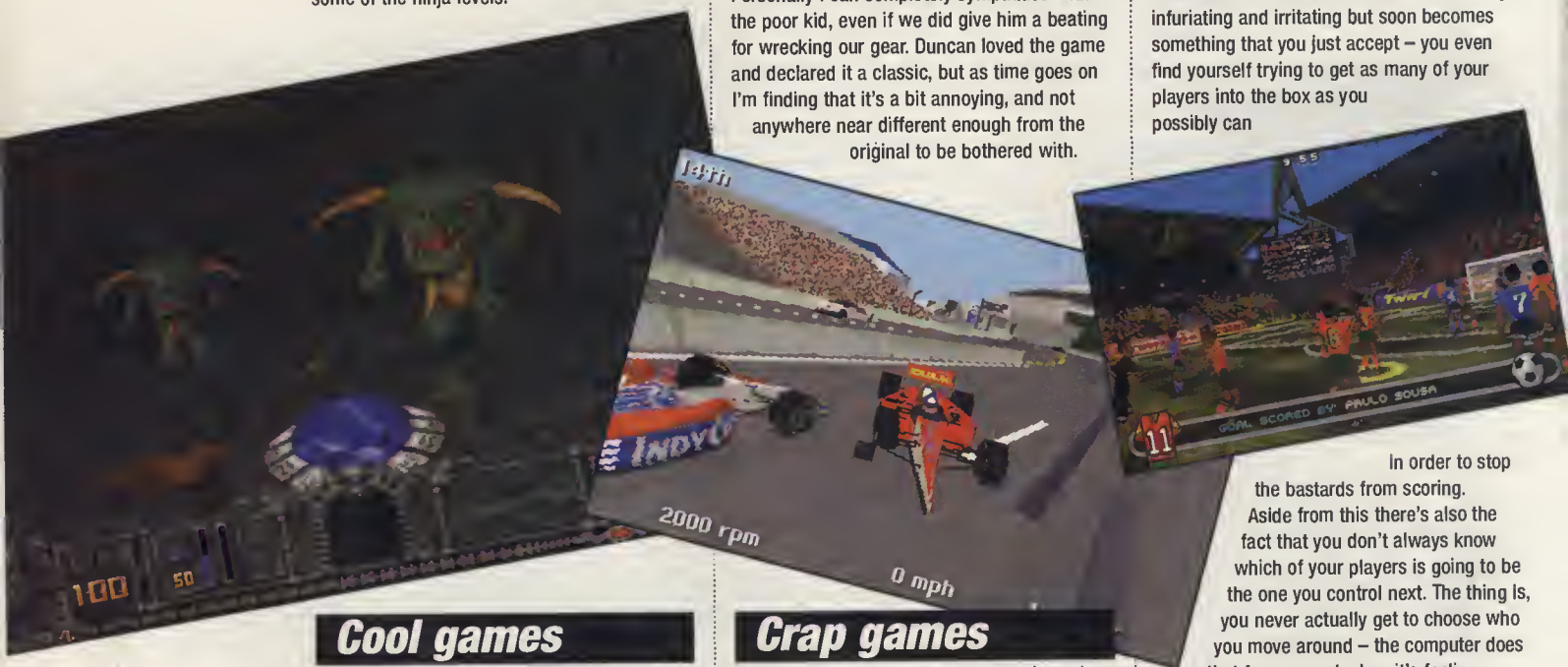
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Reviewed issue 34

Widely heralded as the very best soccer game on the PC, *Actua Soccer* has now had a pretty fair amount of time in which to win its way into the collective heart of *PC Zone*. When we reviewed the game in the last issue we gave it a mighty 92 per cent, and while we still stand by this mark, there are a number of comments that we need to add to the original review. While outshining *FIFA 96* and *Sensible World Of Soccer*, there are nevertheless a few minor quibbles that are only revealed after prolonged and extensive research into the wee hours of these cold winter nights.

The first of these comments is that the bloody thing is absolutely riddled with bugs. Initially you don't notice any of them, but after a good few weeks of play they start to crop up all over the place. In the review we touched on the fact that the goalies had some problems, but they are now all generally regarded as being utterly, utterly crap. At best they jump half-heartedly for the ball, at worst they just stand there and watch as the ball careers past their left earhole and into the net. It's bloody infuriating and irritating but soon becomes something that you just accept – you even find yourself trying to get as many of your players into the box as you possibly can in order to stop the bastards from scoring.

Aside from this there's also the fact that you don't always know which of your players is going to be the one you control next. The thing is, you never actually get to choose who you move around – the computer does that for you, and when it's feeling particularly malevolent it arses around for ages and ages and does its best to get you thoroughly confused.

These niggles aside though, it's still completely excellent, and while the problems make the game far from perfect, none of them warrant it getting a kicking. Fundamentally, *Actua Soccer* is an absolutely brilliant game and hopefully the much-rumoured *Actua 2* will remedy all of these little niggles.



Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Actua Soccer
Command & Conquer (still)
Wing Commander IV
Hexen
Virtua Fighter Remix

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying 'please steal me' and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Rapid Assault
Triple Threat
Aliens: A Comic Book Adventure
Cyberbykes
Trophy Bass

Reviews Section

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ *CLASSIC*
Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc, etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes *oozing* playability.

80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70–79
A good idea that's been reasonably well-implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying, "Do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

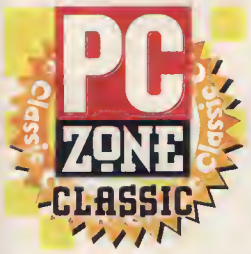
60–69
Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50–59
Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40–49
A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20–39
Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below *PANTS*
Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the *PC Zone* big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.



PC Zone use Gateway 2000 PCs exclusively 'cause they're absolutely fab. If you want any more information about Gateway 2000 machines, you can call them on this number:

0800 742000

GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

Thanks to
Simon Byron
Andrea Griffiths (Electronic Arts)
Stuart Campbell
Jim Beavan
Doug Johns

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Wing

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

'Cover dim wingmen' is an anagram of *Wing Commander IV*. Since there's loads of great anagrams to be derived from Charlie Brooker's name ('Bleak Ice Horror', 'Relic Hooker Bra', and 'Bile Horror Cake' to name but three), we at Zen Cop decided to give him the job of checking it out.

WHEN YOU TELL SOMEONE THAT you actually get paid hard cash to write computer game reviews, they usually say one of the following things:

1: You jammy bastard! You play games all day long – and you get paid for it? (Which is usually followed by a phone call two weeks later, asking if you can magically provide their little brother/nephew/sad mate with a sackload of free games, preferably the latest and most expensive ones.)

2: Cuh! There can't be that much to say about them – after all, they're either shit or they're not.

3: Ergh! Piss off, saddo! The overriding impression they have is that it's easy. And sometimes it is. *Wing Commander IV* is not one of the 'easy ones'. It's got great bits, and it's got shit bits. And it's huge (in every sense of the word – we're talking six CDs worth here). 50 per cent of the game comprises high quality movie magic, and 50 per cent is cockpit space combat shenanigans.

Eeeesh. I just don't know where to start, so let's take a bloody big lump hammer and smash this review up into separate, digestible chunks. Hopefully then by the end I'll have reached a conclusion. Ready? Good. Here we go...

Flighty bits

The combat sections in *WCIV* aren't really very different from *WCIII*. In fact, the only real departure I could identify was the lack of the old 'your knees in the cockpit' view (always a little corny, that, anyhow): it's been replaced by a new, improved heads-up display which tells you everything, from how much damage your hull has endured, to the location of your enemies' erogenous zones (well, nearly). On a fast machine (which means a P75 or above), running in SVGA mode, the ships are superbly detailed and move in a suitably silky and svelte manner – the effect, at times, can be stunning. There is a VGA mode at your disposal, but since the graphics have been designed specifically with high-res clarity in mind, things tend to

Commander IV

(Above) The polygon ships all look fantastic in SVGA, but... er, what's that big blue blob?

(Left) Home base, looking uncannily like BattleStar Galactica.

start looking like a Ceefax copywriter's nightmare whenever you get close to something. Stick to SVGA, that's my advice. Oh, once you've bought that Pentium, that is.

But there's another problem – and it's a problem which was also apparent in all the preceding *Wing Commander* games. Now, I don't know quite how to put this, but – they've made 'space' look, well, a bit wrong. The use of giant bitmaps in the distance (representing planets, galaxies, etc), may look nice in the static screenshots, but when you're actually flying the thing, it looks downright odd. It's as if these distant constellations are actually painted on a big black curtain which you happen to be flying around in front of. There are a few moving stars (*à la X-Wing*), but not enough, leaving no real sense of depth or speed. Perhaps this constitutes realism (after all, outer space is basically a giant void with a few twinkly pretty bits miles off in the distance), but I don't care much for it. To be honest, the 'Starfield Simulation' standard screensaver that comes with Windows gives a better sense of depth. So there.

WCIV also features a few low-level ground-hugging missions, too. These look fantastic – plenty of SVGA-textured landscaping as far as the eye can see. Very pretty. As a matter of fact, you'll have plenty of time to admire the lush greenery beneath you, since these sections suffer from extreme jerk-o-vision. I was running the game on a Pentium 133 with 24MB of RAM and a 4MB video card (we use it here for creating new life-forms) and it was a bit of a flick screen affair during these missions, so I think it's safe to assume that a lower spec machine will probably glow red and explode under the circumstances. God only knows what machines they've got at Origin – my guess is they use five whole Pentiums glued together just to

(Above) The rendered bits in all of the cut scenes are just as impressive as the movie bits.

(Left) Some space, some er, fighters and a big spaceship. And not a lot of action going on. Pretty though, isn't it?

Minimum specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM
Processor: 486DX2/66 or higher
Graphics: VGA, VESA Local Bus Video Card
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse
Note: MS-DOS 5.0 and up, 20Mb hard disk space and double-speed CD drive required

Recommended

Memory: 16Mb RAM
Processor: Pentium 75 MHz or higher
Graphics: PCI SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, Flightstick Pro, Thrustmaster
Note: 20Mb hard disk space and quad-speed CD drive required

« work out the installation routines. But my gripes don't end there, either. The missions themselves are really pretty lacklustre. You come under attack so often that pretty soon nothing surprises you. Things only hot up later on in the game when you get to try out a few different kinds of spacecraft (I'm trying not to give anything away here, folks).

The filmy bits

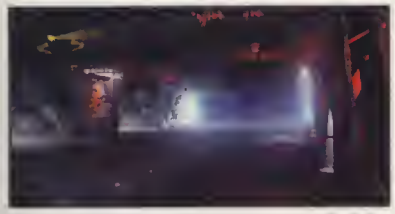
Apparently, the cinematic sequences in *Wing Commander IV* cost a phenomenal amount to make – over eight million dollars – and it shows. In fact, it looks like they tied up bundles of dollar bills, fed them into an automated tennis ball server, and fired them at the thing. For one thing, *Wing Commander IV* uses proper sets, as opposed to the rendered backgrounds which tend to dominate the majority of videogame cut scenes. The use of real sets has allowed a more 'filmic' style of production than we're used to seeing in games – once you've seen it running it's easy to appreciate how even simple cinematic devices, such as the humble tracking shot, can make a huge difference.

Add to this the fact that it's all been shot on 35mm film (as opposed to the horrendously digital look of video), and Origin's excellent new video compression routine (which is a great improvement over *WCIII*, in that it provides 16-bit colour, Dolby surround sound, and runs smoothly), and you've got the most impressive cut scenes ever seen.

Er, did I say cut scenes? Well, that's not strictly true – they're interactive cut scenes. Every so often the action will pause, allowing you to choose Mark Hamill's next move. But don't dismiss this immediately, this is a lot more fun than it sounds – I'd be perfectly happy to be able to skip through all the space flight sections and just 'play' my way through the film instead. And further commendations must go to the script – okay, so it's hardly in the same league as Tarantino, but it's certainly a huge improvement over *WCIII* – and the performances, which are great all round.

But the biggest surprise of all is the plot – yes, it's genuinely interesting. In fact, I'm being careful to give as little as possible away, but without spoiling it all for you I think I can just say that it's a measure of the storyline's strength that the final dramatic sequence does not involve something large exploding in the traditional action movie style – instead it relies on performance and dialogue to draw its thrills.

(Bottom row) The ships in *WCIV* are all very impressively modelled with texture-maps all over the bloody place.



What's changed since WCIII?

What's changed? Er, well... um... here's Origin's very own list of improvements, quoted verbatim: "*Wing Commander IV* features many new improvements over *Wing Commander III*. These include: digital music, realistic textures for the space flight objects, cool cockpit HUDs, new weapons/missiles, improved movie player allowing the playback of 16-bit color/16-bit stereo movies! New explosion effects."

'Better than *X-Wing!*'. Or even perhaps 'Ginger Lynn Allen is back... and this time, she's doing *what she's famous for!*'

It's a rich man's world

Ah. Money, money, money. You know I was just thinking: it must be funny. In a rich man's world. *Wing Commander IV* is going to wring every ounce of silicon out of your processor chip and if you haven't got a Pentium 90 or above, it's probably going to bleed it dry. Yet again,

"Apparently the cinematic sequences cost over eight million dollars to make – and it looks like it. WCIV has the most impressive cut scenes ever seen."

Hold on just a second. Doesn't that all sound a bit lame to you? It does to me – Origin hasn't really made any real improvements to the combat sections. Let's face it, anyone who played *WCIII* in its entirety would want to see some *real* improvements being touted for *WCIV*. Things like 'Ten times more *fun*!' or it's a case of ignoring the minimum specs and concentrating instead on the 'recommended' ones. And frankly, I don't think it's worthwhile. Way, way back in issue 2 we covered *X-Wing*, LucasArts' classic space combat sim. *X-Wing* will run comfortably on a 386 (I've even heard rumours of it running »

Hey, hey, it's the cast!

MARK HAMILL as Col. Christopher Blair

I think I'm warming to the new '90s Hamill (although this piccie does look seriously airbrushed!). He could have played Blair as a priggish, loathsome gung-ho Hollywood 'hero'. Instead, his performance is understated, sardonic and at times downright world-weary. In fact, I reckon he's tops. He's certainly mastered the smouldering looks and at times he's downright hard.

TOM WILSON as 'Maniac'

Yes, it's good old *Back to the Future* Biff again. Apparently, in real life he's an accomplished stand-up comedian who may even be quite funny at times. He gives good comic relief in *WCIV* too, as Major Maniac, the loudmouthed yet insecure braggart. Lawks-a-mercy. Real characters in a computer game. Whatever is the world coming to? Caring and sharing?

MALCOLM McDOWELL as Admiral Tolwyn

One of the best things about *Wing IV* is the fact that it's got Malcolm McDowell in it. McDowell is, for my money, the most woefully under-used British actor in existence right now. Having risen to prominence in Lindsay Anderson's ground-breaking and anarchic *If...* good old Malcolm went on to play Alex in Kubrik's infamous *A Clockwork Orange* – turning in a performance of such eerily detached malevolence that the mere sight of his on-screen grin is enough to raise hairs on the back of your neck. Other classic 'Malc' movies include *O Lucky Man!* (which has one of the greatest movie endings of all time), and *Britannia Hospital* (in which he gets spectacularly pulled to bits). He also starred in one of the worst films ever made, *Caligula*, in which he sleeps with a horse and Helen Mirren in the course of one movie.
Nowadays he's usually found playing a generic unhinged bad guy in countless braindead Hollywood clunkers. Boo. Well, I say it's time for the Malc revival. I want to see Malc in the next Tarantino movie. Or the next Woody Allen movie. Or indeed, any movie whose makers are capable of writing a script worthy of the man. Malcolm McDowell, I salute you.

JASON BERNARD as Eisen

According to my Origin press pack, Jason Bernard is an extremely versatile and experienced actor. What interests me most however, is the fact that he used to play the boss in *Herman's Head* (the weird *Numbskulls*-style US sitcom which used to be on Channel 4 at about 3am). He also plays your boss in *WCIV* – and since you have to make decisions as events unfold – just like Herman had to – the whole thing becomes eerily like *Herman's Head in Space*. Guest starring Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell.

on a 286... no, really) and it's still a more satisfying game than *WCIV*. 'Ah,' I hear you cry, 'but *X-Wing* hasn't got lovely movie sections in it, has it?' – and you're right. But nothing's stopping you from playing a mission from *X-Wing*, then watching a scene from a *Star Wars* video, going back to *X-Wing*, watching another scene, etc etc... *et voilà!* A full cinematic sci-fi combat experience, twice as rewarding as *WCIV* at a fraction of the cost.

"It's a bit like flicking between two TV broadcasts: one an exciting big budget sci-fi extravaganza, the other an episode *of* Buck Rogers in the 25th Century."

The conclusion

Origin's spent a lot of time and money on this game. They've drafted in a host of talented actors, professional cameramen, set designers, special effects guys... yup, the works – and the result is the most cinematic gaming experience you will find. But what they haven't done is to *improve the bloody gameplay*. The combat missions, while pretty, are mundane and unimaginative compared to the film sequences. There are a few improvements in the mission structuring and there are some totally new bits that happen over the planetary surface, the learning curve's been tweaked a bit, so innocent newbies won't have to worry about configuring their weapons set-up, choice of wingmen, etc, until later on into the game but the flight engine is basically the same as before.

At the end of the day, the two sections don't meld together quite as well as they should. The movie sequences are exemplary, the combat is okay. Playing your way through the game is a little like flicking between two simultaneous TV broadcasts, one of which is a big budget, exciting sci-fi extravaganza starring lots of famous names, while the other is a workman-like episode of *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, in which you have to steer Buck's ship for him.

(Above) Wahey! Some action. Surprisingly, things don't slow down too much when there's a lot going on.

(Right) Tolwyn points at nothing in particular.

(Far Right) Spook!

On second thoughts

In some ways Charlie may have been a bit harsh – not much, but a bit. Chris has been jumping up and down in the office since the prospect of the fourth *Wing Commander* game was discussed; I guess people are either Origin fans or they're not. Personally, I've always preferred *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter*, but it has to be said that the overall quality of *WCIV* makes it the best so far. Yes, the movie sections are cool – but so what? The game allegedly cost $10 million to produce, and you can't help but wonder where all of the dosh went. Yes, the quality of the video is the best there is, but it doesn't add to the gameplay. Atmosphere yes, gameplay no.

What is rather splendid about this latest chapter though is that a) the story has actually changed now (they've finally sacked the Kilrathi storyline, hooray!) and b) there are now some seriously nice ground attack missions that add a little variety to the proceedings. Blow the crap out of the bad guys while cruising over some cool-looking texture-mapped mountains and cities, which does add a unique element to the overall thing.

Wing Commander IV is by no means a classic, but I can heartily recommend it. It's a big game which simply expands on a proven pedigree. It'll no doubt sell by the shitload. ***John***

It lets the whole thing down. Now, as far as I can see, Origin should do one of the following things before even thinking about releasing *Wing Commander V*:

1: Spend every single waking moment improving the existing flight engine and game dynamics, totally rewriting it if necessary (at this point cue the programmers: 'shyeah, right!') or...

2: Completely cut out all the combat sections and just put out a fully fledged movie instead. **Z**

Score

85

Great movie. So-so game.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** February 96
Publisher: Origin/Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

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Virtua Fighter Re

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

(Above) The lighting effects during the night-time stages are particularly smart.

(Above right) It'll take you quite a while to work out the special moves – even then it's hard to remember what they are.

(Below) As you can see, the detail on all the fighters is mighty impressive.

IF YOU NEEDED ANY FURTHER PROOF that PC games are getting more and more 'arcadey' by the day, then here it is – *Virtua Fighter Remix* for the good ol' IBM compatible, complete with 'Sega' stamped all over it in a fifty-four foot typeface. Flippin' 'eck, Tucker.

That's it, it's time to fix a coin slot to your PC, whack it in the corner of your local chip shop, and stand well back as a crowd of baying truants fills it brim-full of 20p pieces. Sega's *Virtua Fighter* is something of an arcade legend, y'see. It was the first title to feature realistic, smoothly animated 3D polygon fighters, and was an instant success here, there and everybloodywhere – especially in Japan, where 98 per cent of the population can now perform a triple uppercut combo with their eyes closed and one hand tied behind their back. More recently, *Virtua Fighter* has put in an appearance in living rooms the length and breadth of the entire land, courtesy of Sega's 'Next Generation' console, the Saturn.

Now, some of you may be wondering exactly what the *Remix* bit in the title stands for. Don't worry – the soundtrack hasn't been replaced by a naff 12-inch version of Paul Hardcastle's *19* (although there's plenty of "destruction... of men in their prime" on offer). No, no, no... the *Remix* bit indicates that this game is sort of halfway between *Virtua Fighter 1* (fairly basic-looking polygons) and *Virtua Fighter 2* (lush, textured, highly detailed fighters). Feast your eyes on the screen-shots and you'll see what I mean.

Bloody hell

It's impressive stuff. The action is fast and smooth, with no sign of flicker or slowdown. If you've already seen this game running on a Saturn you'll be relieved to hear that this PC incarnation not only runs *just as smoothly*, but it lets you get a good look at the characters, too – unlike the console version they fill up the majority of the screen. On the full detail setting (which *really* shows off by dolloping a coat of Gouraud shading over the top of it all), it looks stunning, especially in the 'night-time' stage set on top of a skyscraper where the two fighters are lit from below. And to top it all, it runs under Windows 95, which means you can switch between the game and that dull old spreadsheet thing in the blink of an eye – an experience so dazzlingly pomo* it made my head spin around just thinking about it. So that's the good news.

And the bad news?

Well, um... Er... Look, I like beat 'em ups – I like them a lot, and

Remix

"Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!" we shouted at Charlie Brooker when *Virtua Fighter Remix* arrived in the office. We should've known better than to be bending over at the time...

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486 (Pentium recommended)

Graphics: Only works with Diamond Edge graphics card

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Sega Saturn-style joypads only

Note: Requires Windows 95

in two-player mode I wholeheartedly love them. I get all sad and trainspotty about them, downloading FAQs and learning the moves, that kind of thing. I've reduced my poor hands to a mass of calluses and sores through repeated performances of Zangief's Spinning Piledriver move in *StreetFighter II*. (I'm still shit at them though.)

Anyway, I have to admit that I never really got into *Virtua Fighter*, neither in the arcades, or on the Saturn. Why? Well, it's pretty hard for me to put my finger on exactly what's wrong, it's a combination of things: the animation looks a little unnatural at times, the special moves aren't exactly intuitive and are tricky to learn – you have to press a button to block instead of just pulling backwards, and the fighters sometimes seem to react quite slowly. Minor niggles, yet when combined they form one medium-sized beef. Alongside the three-dimensional splendour of *Virtua Fighter Remix*, favourites such as *StreetFighter II* and *Mortal Kombat 3* may look like the videogame equivalent of a cardboard cut-out theatre production of *Enter The Dragon* – but when it comes down to the gameplay stakes it's they who are the victors. In other words, top marks for visuals, slightly lower marks for content. And that's that. Z

In perspective

As far as 3D scrappers are concerned, *FX Fighter* is the only real competition – but *Virtua Fighter Remix* has the edge thanks to its hardware-assisted prettiness. However, *Mortal Kombat 3* or *StreetFighter II Turbo* shine more brightly when it comes down to lasting satisfaction. Roll on a PC conversion of *Tekken*, or *X-Men*, say I.

FX Fighter

Mortal Kombat 3

StreetFighter II Turbo

Virtua Fighter Remix

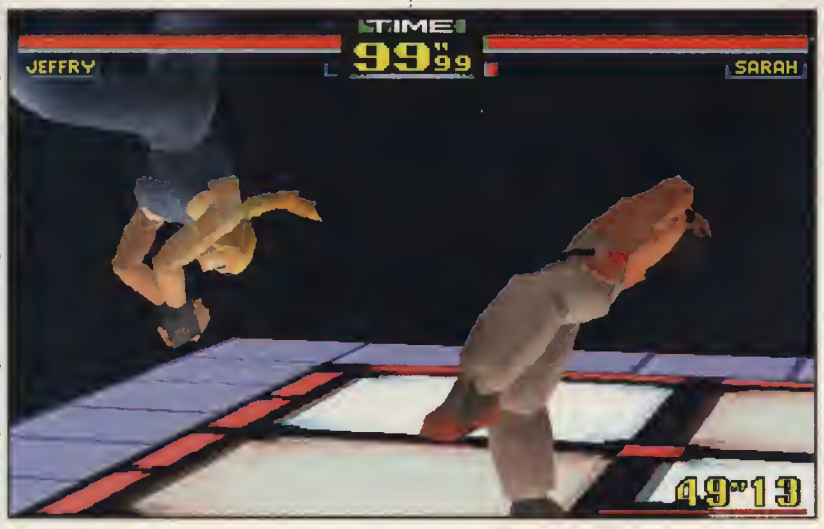
Score

89

An astoundingly good conversion of a flawed classic.

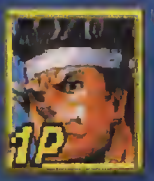
Price: Varies – only available bundled with Diamond Edge graphics card
Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Sega; distributed by Datrontech
Tel: Datrontech 01252 303333

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

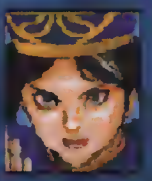


Virtualand's most wanted

Be on the lookout for the following felons. If sighted, do not attempt to apprehend them. Contact the police and then stand back and watch as the Virtua gang kick 'em silly. Because they're cowboys. On the steel horse they ride. And they're wanted (waaaante-eh-eh-ed). Dead or alive.



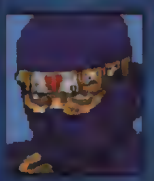
Akira Yuki: Akira is an expert in Taa Kwon Do, Karata, Thuggery, and Spinach (he learnt about the 'orrible green stuff during a day trip to a farm in his schooldays). Ha's particularly good at closa range and has a wida variety of uppercuts and elbow attack moves.



Pai Chan: Pai's a nimble littla vixen capabla of flooring even tha most assured fighter with a devastating flurry of itty-bitty punches. When not fighting in tha virtual arena, she likes to unwind by slowly tearing the haads off gerbils. (And for added entertainmant you can try to give her a good whack and laugh as her hat flies off.)

Jeffry McWild: Jaffry's a pretty cumbersome fellow, but don't lat that put you off. Ha's the strongest of the fighters, and can perform a frightening array of bone-splintering throws. On his days off, however, he can be found down the local docks, wearing a littla plaated skirt, charging sailors 50p a time for some 'executive ralief'. Allegedly.

Lau Chan: Lau is actually Pai's fathar, so watching him scrap with her is a little unsattling – aspacially if ha throws her to the floor and does a double stomp on her head, which he does a lot.



Kage: Kage suffered from dreadful acna in his youth and wears a mask to covar up tha appalling collaction of bobbles and pits that makes up 90 per cent of his face. As you might imagine, he's a pretty angry guy. He's also a ninja who performs aoma of the gama'a slightly mora ridiculous moves, such as leaping in the air and landing on his opponent head first. Now that's downright stupid.

Jacky Bryant: Jacky is Sarah'a brothar (sea below). This is all getting a little lika *Neighbours*, really (perhaps Kage stays in their house?). And Lau is the horrible bloka next door who keeps telling them not to play tha music so loud whenever they throw a party. Jacky's much the same as his sis, only a little less effective.

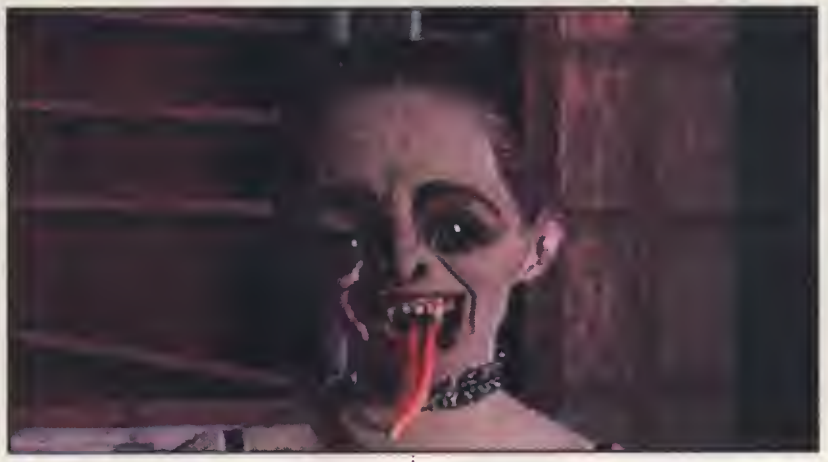
Wolf Hawkfield: Wolf wears his own variation of Adam Ant's 'Prince Charming' make-up throughout the game. The similarities end there, however, as Wolf is less likely to be found singing about ridicule being "nothing to ba scared of" than he is to ba anapping your arm in three different places at once.

Sarah Bryant: The obligatory 'fit bird', Sarah is perhaps the most varsatila character, coupling speed and agility with a wide ranga of attacks. A CD of rendered images of her in a bikini is available in Japan for saddos (this is true); presumably this enables enthusiasts to loosan thair wrists prior to a bout – I've heard that a sticky right hand makes some of the more complex movas a bit easier.

* Pomo: a cybertwatty word meaning 'Post Modern'. So now you know.

The 11th Hour

In which Paul Presley displays a worrying degree of knowledge about the American pornographic industry and gets frustrated by simple parlour games. Where else on God's fine earth would you ever find such a potentially lethal combination?



(Right) Those Pot Noodles have some funny side-effects – she couldn't have left it to stand for the full two minutes.

EVER WATCHED A PORNOGRAPHIC film? (*Oh god, I hope you can justify such a tenuous link between pornography and games – Ed.*) And no, I'm not talking about the '70s/German lederhosen/twanging guitar kind of porn, but the recent American offerings that are usually just send-ups of mainstream films (*Forrest Hump, Jurassic Pork* and *The Beverly Thrillbillies,* to name but three). The reason I ask is because it seems to me that the American games industry has reached the point where practically every game has to include at least 40 minutes of Full Motion Video by law, but some games companies don't seem able to afford the type of directors who are capable of the stunning levels of cinematic excellence on display in films like *Pulp Fiction, The Usual Suspects, Leon* or *Fletch.* Instead, the only directors to fit their budget are those who produce the kind of straight-to-video releases that even a store such as Blockbusters wouldn't dare to stock, or modern American porno flicks. And, unfortunately, nowhere is this more evident than in *The 11th Hour,* Trilobyte's long-awaited sequel to *The 7th Guest.*

Confessions of a games reviewer

I don't mean to be flippant or anything, it's just that the FMV segments in the game are really pretty awful – not in terms of quality, mind you; in fact these are some of the best looking pieces of video I've ever seen in a computer game. But from a dramatic point of view they have all the tension of a Rich Tea biscuit that's been sitting in a cup of hot water for the past 30 minutes. What they do contain in abundance is large-breasted women wearing unfeasibly tight cotton tops that serve to show off every silicon-implanted curve, as well as all the signs of a director who recently completed shooting *When Harry Shagged Sally.*

You know the score: when a film has little or no requirement for dramatic content but every need to maximise the viewer's anticipation for the dirty bits, it will be filled with all sorts of useless shots that are only there to show off the talent's bod. For instance, we have a shot of our leading lady getting out of a car and going into a restaurant. It takes about five minutes from the car pulling up to her being seated and asking for a menu, during which there's absolutely nothing to report other than the fact that your eyes are glued to her breasts (watch a porn film and pay attention to the 'story' bits and you'll soon see what I mean). Every segment in *The 11th Hour* feels something akin to a porn version of *Twin Peaks* (except that as this is a computer game there are no really 'dirty' bits, despite the 18 rating).

But the game's good, right?

Er, this is the sequel to *The 7th Guest,* remember? Anyway, I'll quickly inform you what's going on – partly because it's a little bit complicated and partly because the plot only reveals itself as you play the game, and nice, friendly reviewer that I am I wouldn't want to spoil it for you. But without giving too much away, you play a sort of American Roger Cook (only you've got a heroically proportioned body) whose producer and

(Right) A touch too much Ragu, methinks.

(Far right) Carl's attempts to strike up a meaningful dialogue with a female produces the usual results...

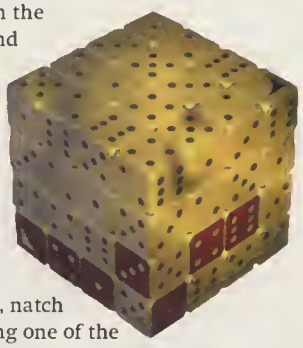
(Left) One of the less-than-successful alternatives suggested by Yorkshire Water.

(Above) "But Officer, why on earth do I have to remove my clothes just for having a defective brake light?"

"Look here, I don't make the rules ma'am, I just enjoy 'em."

ex-lover (female, I hasten to add – the world still awaits the first homosexual computer character) has vanished while researching a story about the old Stauf mansion from *The 7th Guest*.

And then, while you're moping about your house watching a news report (why do they *always* seem to be watching a news report in these things?), a small PDA is delivered containing a cry for help from the missus and a pointer to the mansion. So off to the rescue you go (on your Harley Davidson, natch – replaying one of the most clichéd pieces of motorcycle footage ever), off to the exceedingly strange world of Henry Stauf and his seemingly never-ending assortment of parlour games and brain-teasers.



Admittedly, this time round Trilobyte has spiced things up slightly with a sort of treasure hunt aspect. So apart from solving each of the room's puzzles, you have to fathom little riddles that point to an object somewhere in the house: get the right object and a piece of video tells you a bit of what happened to your beloved. The clever part is that not all the objects are accessible until you've solved a puzzle or two, so both sides of the game have to be played to win.

Kenneth Kendall meets The Crystal Maze

From a basic gameplay point of view, *The 11th Hour* isn't much different to *The 7th Guest*. The treasure hunt aspect adds somewhat to the challenge and the video sequences are nicely integrated into the overall game, lending a strange kind of atmosphere that's tacky yet somehow professional – but at the end of the day you'll find that while 90 per cent of your time is spent staring at the screen, only the remaining 10 per cent is enjoyable interaction. It's frustrating, and you can't help feeling that for the amount of effort that's been put into the game's presentation, there should be something more to do.

All the old gripes about *The 7th Guest* are present: interminable wandering around the old mansion, pre-rendered animations that wane after the first five viewings, a slight Americanism to some of the riddles that mean nothing to us limeys and plenty of potential hardware problems and memory conflicts (we had a bugger of a time getting it to run).

Who knows, though? This may well be your cup of tea (or 'damn fine coffee' if you prefer). You may enjoy the slower pace of brain-teasers and riddles and, to tell the truth, I'll admit to suffering from the old 'ooh, just one more go before I leave it' syndrome – there's definitely some kind of subconscious desire not to quit a puzzle until it's solved. Some of *The 11th Hour* screams, 'Awful!' – so why do I want to go back and play it? I guess tackiness rules. Z

(Below left) After some deliberation, Mavis decided against a natural childbirth. *(That was terrible, you're fired – Ed.)*

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Score

67

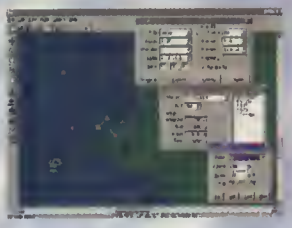
Erm, parlour games and pornography. Not the best of combinations.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** TBC
Publisher: Trilobyte/VIE
Tel: 0171-368 2255
Web: http://www.vie.com

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Oy vey, enough with the blue screen already!

Just a quick personal message, if I may, to all the film directors, games producers and any combination thereof that might be reading this review. Will you please SHUT UP about the marvels of 'blue screen' technology and how it enables you to put computer-generated backdrops behind filmed acting scenes? We know! We all know! There isn't anybody left out there who doesn't know! Blue screen has been around for so long now that it practically comes free with every basic camcorder in Dixons. I no longer wish to hear how "it enables you to create stunning fantasy scenes with very little time and effort" or how it "means the actors have to try and visualise what's actually happening because *they can't actually see it!*" The reason I mention it is because *The 11th Hour* comes with a behind-the-scenes documentary that has an entire section where the game's producers pay homage to the great blue screen god, and frankly it annoyed me to see these people talking about it as if no one had ever heard of it before. I mean, quite apart from anything else, it doesn't work. Well I ask you, have you ever seen a piece of 'blue screened' footage that *didn't* look completely fake? If you have, please write in and tell me because I'll gladly eat my own words to see such a miraculous beastie.



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"Scorchingly realistic." - PC Games

"The detail is incredible." - PC Review

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Another day, another pinball game. And another review by Patrick 'Flipper' McCarthy. The world just keeps getting better, doesn't it?

Extreme Pinball

OBIDIAH RADAMANTHUS, THE FAMOUS two-tiered bed manufacturer, at a meeting with his workers in 1885 to announce wage cuts and a new sex slave policy with their wives, was surprised to hear them mention last year's salary. "Last year is history," he said in his unpleasant Northern accent, "and history is bunk." Then again, on other occasions he also said, "Geography is bunk," and "Latin is bunk," and even, on one particularly memorable occasion, "Home Economics is bunk." But then after all, he was the inventor of the bunk bed.

Back to history. An ancient Japanese philosopher once said, "Never forget you work within a context or that you're part of history. And never ever forget to clench your buttocks and grip the seat in front of you when passing wind on the Bullet Train." It's the history bit we're interested in here. Epic produced a pinball game a few years ago called, with some degree of imagination, *Epic Pinball*. It was fast, smooth-scrolling, and shareware. And it got good reviews.

Two years later

Enter *Extreme Pinball*. And it's exactly the same as *Epic Pinball*. However, things have changed in the interim. We've all got a bit older and a bit wiser (except for those who've got a bit stupider from playing too many computer games). Pinball games are now more sophisticated. And this... is exactly the same.

Which means?

A flat, top-down viewpoint of a scrolling table that moves pretty quickly. Music which sounds rather like Rolf Harris impersonating Kraftwerk. Sound effects that can best be described as muted. Graphics that were functional rather than stunning even two years ago.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386/33
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard

There are four tables, but as one of them is already available as shareware you're really only getting three for your money. Each has a 'theme': Mediaeval Knights, Monkey Madness, Urban Chaos, and Rock Fantasy. In other words, each table has a few badly executed drawings scattered about that look like they may have been done by the bloke who does the paintings for betting shop windows, and the holes, ramps and stuff have suitably different names.

Basically, there's nothing that hasn't been seen before in the other million pinball games around. There's nothing really wrong with it, but then there's nothing to make you sit up and take notice. It's a pinball game, and it works. That's about it. It doesn't have any faults as such, it's just old hat. If you want top-quality pinball action, with great visuals, get *Pro Pinball: The Web*. Z

Score

65

Aaaaaaaaaggggggghhhhhh!

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** TBC
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Oh no, another product with the clichéd 'virtual' in the title. But is there good reason for this? Are these *Virtual Karts* really virtual? Like really, really, virtual? Duncan MacDonald thinks that they might possibly not be.

Virtual Karts

(Right) Careering (if you can career at such a slow speed) towards straw bales is possibly the most fun to be had in *Virtual Karts*.

HERE'S A QUICK SCREENPLAY DOOFER in which a punter wanders into a computer store, and... well, you'll find out soon enough.

Scene One

A punter is standing by the PC games shelf, looking intently at the back of a box he's holding. Cue subdued chatter in the background. The camera is ever-so-slowly zooming in on his face. He's thinking to himself, so his 'speech' sounds slightly reverby.

Punter: *(Thinking)* Wow, these screenshots look pretty neat. This looks as detailed as *IndyCar 2*. Oh look, that bridge has the word MicroProse plastered all over it. Is this a MicroProse game then? *(He flips the box, finds that indeed it is, and then continues to think.)* Well, *F1GP2* isn't here, and karts are just as much fun as racing cars. More, in a way, 'cos you can really slide them. Hey! You can change tyres and stuff. This is a real sim! Yes! Yes!'

Scene Two

The camera looks down from above as the punter hands his cash to the shop assistant,who slides the *Virtual Karts* box and a receipt into a carrier bag.

Assistant: There you go, mate.

Punter: Cheers. I'm really looking forward to this. See ya!

Assistant: No worries. Take it easy, yeah?

(Below) Oh! The excitement of it all! Apparently my kart's whizzing along at a phenomenal ten miles an hour! Wow!

(Below left) And they're off! Watch out for kart carnage (er, but don't hold your breath).

A steadycam follows the punter through the door, homeward bound. Slow-slow fade to black. Night-time sounds occur, for about seven seconds.

Scene Three

The camera is now outside the shop, looking at the door from a distance. Slow-slow fade up from black... it's the next morning. A distant clock dings ten times as we witness the punter striding along the pavement. On the final chime, the camera moves inside the shop, above the counter again. The punter enters the shop and approaches an assistant. There is a brief but loaded pause. Then...

Assistant: Yes? Can I help?

Punter: Er, yes, you can. I bought this game yesterday... er, as a present for someone... er, but he's already got it.

Assistant: I remember you. But I also seem to remember you saying, "I'm really looking forward to this", just before you left the shop.

Punter: Did I? Oh... um, I just meant I was really looking forward to, er, giving it as a present... to my, er, cousin. He's, erm, he's got leukaemia, you see. He's only nine. No, six, in fact! White as a ghost. No hair. Continual pain and agony. Colostomy bag. And his parents were killed last week, in, um, a balloon crash. It's tragic. So, er, can you, er, you know... can I like *swap* it?

Assistant: No.

So the game's crap then?

To say that *Virtual Karts* is complete crap would be unfair – it's just that it's not particularly good, that's all. There are three types of kart on offer, 12 pretty samey tracks, and the tried and tested single race or season options. Oh, and eight-player networking's possible, so thumbs up there. But the karts don't really handle much like karts, the hi-res graphics are jerk-tastic, and things aren't exactly ultra-smooth even in VGA (and that's on a P75, to boot). As well as that, playing from the CD (a full install costs you 80 megs or so), the accessing pauses are phenomenal – it's as if you're downloading video from the Net! (Yup, we're talking half a cigarette per track here, on a quad-speed drive.)

And to compound all this, *Virtual Karts* is too bloody easy. Using a really shit joystick, and not knowing *any* of the tracks, I managed to win the Full Season on my first go, which took about an hour and a half, including the CD accessing time. So now you know why the punter in the screenplay took his copy of *Virtual Karts* back to the shop. Actually, let's have a happy ending: I'll change the last bit of Scene Three.

Punter: ...And his parents were killed last week, in, um, a balloon crash. It's tragic. So, er, can you, er, you know... can I like *swap* it?

Assistant: Yes. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/66 (minimum)
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse
Notes: Double-speed CD drive required

Score

71

It's a mildly absorbing distraction for a couple of hours – but not much longer.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: MicroProse
Tel: 01454 326532

GATEWAY2000

AVAILABLE NOW

ONE PACK

3 GAMES

PC CD-ROM

NOVA LOGIC

WORLD OF Combat

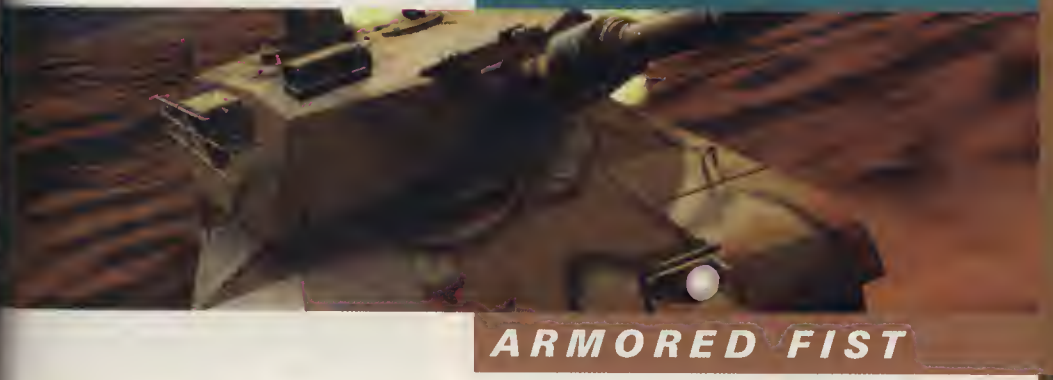
VOLUME 1

COMANCHE

RAH-66 Comanche attack helicopter-Air to Air combat

WOLFPACK

Submarine vs Destroyer naval warfare



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Command multiple tanks over 3-D terrain

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3 CLASSIC NOVALOGIC GAMES

95

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

The bookies are offering 200-1 on Duncan MacDonald avoiding three special words in this review... will he suceed?

This Means

I'M GOING TO TRY MY UTMOST TO WRITE this review without mentioning any of the words 'command', 'and', or 'conquer'. If I inadvertently mention one of them, however, I'm still totally determined that they won't be bunched up together in any shape or form – like in 'command and conquer'.

...Damn! I've failed already.

Still, it makes things a bit easier. So, let's call a spade a spade, and say that *This Means War!* and *Command & Conquer* are sort of like half-brothers. They've got the same mum, as it were, but different dads. The father of *Command & Conquer* (let's call him Pete) is into fighting in pubs, ram raiding, and setting fire to farmyard animals. He's currently in jail, serving seven years for armed robbery – and is highly unlikely to receive such a thing as remission for good behaviour.

Now cue Nigel, who is the father of *This Means War!* Nigel is very interested in the history of warfare, and visits the library twice a week, where he studies hefty tomes with titles like *Montgomery in North Africa, Resource and Management Under Duress,* and *Farming For The Whole Community.* He owns a magnifying glass, collects postage stamps, and is about to renew his subscription to *Guns and Ammo* magazine.

Eh? You what?

Okay, so maybe I've gone a bit quickly. It's time, perhaps, to backtrack. In fact I may even be forced to mention the *This Means War!* plot, which is something along the following lines...

'A computer game was distributed worldwide, as freeware, and was so popular that it eventually found itself installed on every computer known to man. No problem... until its built-in virus was triggered. A global system crash then occurred, inducing chaos. Breakdown. Anarchy.' And now the slow build up from anarchy is on the move, with lots of warring factions; and you're in charge, obviously, of one of them.

So. What do you do?

Well, pretty much the same as you would in *C&C*, as it happens, but with more emphasis on the sort of resource management stuff you'd find in *Sim City,* or *Transport Tycoon.* For instance, once you've built a barracks and the relevant factories (and have met a few other requirements), you can then start churning out soldiers and tanks. However, your army boys need civilians back at home to man the production, so you need to tend to your population, which entails nurturing them with food so they can reproduce, and power so their lightbulbs work. This means you'll need a farm, and some oil wells. And then, if things go well, what was originally a bunch of tents will tend to turn into a trailer park. And then into houses. Keep going and, *á la Sim City,* eventually you'll have lofty skyscrapers.

But as well as that you'll also have a massive population. So you'll need more farms. And more power. And you might

(Above right) You can control each of the units very simply with the use of handy pop-up menus.

(Right) The red circle indicates the attack range of the unit you have selected.

(Left) Soldiers can be controlled using very simple but effective icons.

War! War! War!

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse

want to create extra engineers. At the same time the reserves in your steel plant may be running low, so you'll be planning another mine, and a couple more lorries for transportation duty. You know the score: a huge juggling act.

Bang, bang, bang...

As with *C&C*, your view of the landscape is restricted – if you want to see beyond your initial starting point, you have to send units to explore. At the very start of the game you only have access to light infantry, and they're slow, but later on specialist scouts and suchlike become available. And this, as you'll have guessed, adds to the juggling act.

they go. And you can group select too, yup, like *C&C*. Unlike *C&C*, if you right-click on a unit, up pops a mini menu containing loads of orders – hold position, attack, retreat, and several others. The different types of personnel and vehicles have their own specific mini menus. Engineers can build bridges over rivers, scouts can 'shadow' an enemy soldier (hopefully resulting in you discovering where he's based). You can spy, too, and nick the enemy's technology or incite his people to riot. The list of options is pretty extensive.

But anyway, the battles. How about I give you a list of stuff you can hope to eventually construct – that is, once your

"Let's call a spade a spade... This Means War! and Command & Conquer are sort of like half-brothers. They've got the same mum, but different dads."

Do you make loads of unarmed scouts and go and find the enemy immediately, thereby alerting them to your presence? Or do you construct armoured vehicles and soldiers for defence duty in case of a surprise attack while you concentrate on building the productivity of your city? Horses for courses.

But whatever units you do construct, you move them about, again, just as you would in *C&C*. It's a case of clicking on an item, dragging the cursor to the particular location you're interested in, and releasing the mouse button. Off

research department has invented it. Here goes: scouts, engineers, light and heavy infantry, dump trucks, marines, bazooka and mortar personnel, scout and battle bikes, construction vehicles, military trucks, jeeps, rapid assault vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, light tanks, medium and heavy tanks, missile tanks, hovercrafts, towed and mobile artillery, rocket launchers, anti aircraft guns, fighter planes, bombers, and helicopters. And that's not even mentioning the city defence items, such as bunkers, gun turrets and walls.

(Below) Okay, okay, so it took me a while to get used to the thing! So I'm crap... what's new?

The bottom line...

So it's sort of *C&C* time again... except not quite. *C&C* is completely and utterly in-your-face. *This Means War!*, on the other hand, is slow. And I mean s-l-o-w. (Zippy scout bike? Scout glacier, more like). This may be down to the excellent AI routines beavering away beneath the surface, but whatever, don't expect to get immediately hooked. *This Means War!* doesn't make your body produce those sort of chemicals – it's a slow burner, with an interface you need to take time with. It takes about four missions before you sink into the pace, but then the interest curve starts to soar skywards.

There really is so much you can do, and once you're fully utilising all the available options – well! – that's when you realise you're addicted. I've already made the obvious comparison to *C&C* and mentioned *Sim City* and *Transport Tycoon*, but it's also similar to something else: *Across The Rhine*. Yup, the anorak game. Stick *Across The Rhine* under a microscope, remove its rucksack, inject a cubic inch of *C&C*'s sperm, and you're just about there. **Z**

Score

89

If a slow-motion *Command & Conquer* and the strategy game *Across The Rhine* had a baby, it'd look like this.

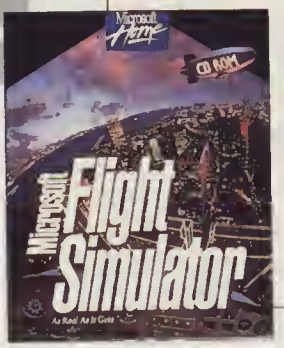
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: MicroProse
Tel: 01454 326532

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Win! Competition

We want to know more about you, cos we like you. We like you a lot. And hey, we care about what you want and we're here to help. We want to know what games you play, what PCs you own, what makes you laugh and what makes you cry. We want to know whether *Doom* is still the only game for you, or if *Actua Soccer* brings you out in goose bumps when you score a goal. We want to make sure you keep on buying *PC Zone*, and we'll do anything (unless it involves Marmite and feathers) to make sure that the first week of every month is the happiest time in your monthly cycle.

And just to make your life that little bit happier, we've teamed up with Microsoft to give you oodles of goodies to make it worth your while filling out the survey. So don't delay, fill it in straight away and send it back to us to the address shown by 1 March 1996.



The first completed survey out of the *PC Zone* cement mixer will receive the following:

FIRST PRIZE:

- A SideWinder™ 3D Pro Joystick
- Copies of *Fury 3*, *Flight Simulator™ 5.1* and *Golf 2.0* (featuring PlayerNet) on CD
- A copy of *Arcade* on 3.5-inch floppy
- A Natural Keyboard
- A copy of *Encarta® 96* – Encyclopaedia World English Edition
- A copy of Windows® 95 on CD

The next completed survey will receive:

SECOND PRIZE:

- A SideWinder™ 3D Pro Joystick
- Copies of both *Fury 3* and *Golf 2.0* on CD
- A copy of Windows® 95 on CD

The next ten completed surveys will receive runners-up prizes of:

TEN RUNNERS-UP PRIZES:

- A SideWinder™ 3D Pro Joystick
- A copy of *Fury 3* on CD

All usual restrictions apply. All surveys must be completed in full, or your entry will be inelligible for entry into the prize draw.

Complete Survey to Enter

Microsoft®

1996 READERSHIP SURVEY & COMPETITION!

1 What kind of processor does your PC have and what is its clock-speed? (If you have more than one PC, tick the one you usually use for playing games)

386SX	☐1(6)	25MHz	☐1(7)
386DX	☐2	33MHz	☐2
486SX	☐3	40Mhz	☐3
486DX	☐4	50MHz	☐4
486DX/2	☐5	60MHz	☐5
486DX/4	☐6	66MHz	☐6
Pentium	☐7	75MHz	☐7
Other processor	☐8	90MHz	☐8
486DX/2 OverDrive	☐9	100MHz	☐9
486DX/2 OverDrive	☐0	120MHz	☐0
Pentium OverDrive	☐x	133MHz	☐x
		Other	☐v

2 Which of the following bus slot types are fitted in your computer? (Tick all applicable)

ISA	☐1(8)
Vesa LB	☐2
PCI	☐3
Other	☐4
Don't know	☐5

3 In total, how much RAM (memory) do you have fitted?

3Mb or less	☐1(9)
4Mb	☐2
5-7Mb	☐3
8Mb	☐4
9-11Mb	☐5
12Mb	☐6
16Mb	☐7
20Mb	☐8
32Mb	☐9
33Mb or more	☐0

4 What was the last computer or games console you used regularly for games?

This is my first	☐1(10)
Another PC	☐2
Amiga/ST	☐3
Spectrum/C64	☐4
MegaDrive/SNES	☐5
Philips CD-i	☐6
Other games console	☐7
Other computer	☐8

WHAT YOU BUY

5 Are you intending to replace your computer in the next 12 months?

Yes	☐1(11)
No	☐2
Not sure	☐3

6 If yes, what do you intend to buy?

486DX/2 PC	☐1(12)
486DX/4 PC	☐2
Pentium PC	☐3
PC with other processor	☐4
Other computer/games console	☐5

7 Are you intending to upgrade your existing computer in the next 12 months?

Yes	☐1(13)
No	☐2
Not sure	☐3

8 Do you have a...

	CD-ROM?	Joystick?	Modem?	Sound card?	MPEG card?
Yes	☐1(14)	☐5	☐9	☐1(15)	☐5
Yes, but I intend to replace soon	☐2	☐6	☐0	☐2	☐6
No	☐3	☐7	☐x	☐3	☐7
No, but I intend to buy one	☐4	☐8	☐v	☐4	☐8

9 In the next 12 months, do you intend to buy...

	Video card	Hard drive	Extra RAM
Yes	☐1(16)	☐4	☐7
No	☐2	☐5	☐8
Not sure	☐3	☐6	☐9

10 How much do you intend to spend on hardware for your PC and/or for a new PC over the next year?

Nothing	☐1(17)
Up to £299	☐2
£300-£599	☐3
£600-£999	☐4
£1000-£1999	☐5
£2000-£4999	☐6
£5000 or more	☐7

11 On average how much do you spend on PC games in 3 months?

	For home	For work
Up to £49	☐1(18)	☐6
£50-£99	☐2	☐7
£100-£199	☐3	☐8
£200-£399	☐4	☐9
£400 or over	☐5	☐0

12 Which of the following influences your decision to buy a game?

Subject matter/genre	☐1(19)
Packaging	☐2
Review in PC Zone	☐3
Review in other mags	☐4
Review on TV/radio	☐5
Word of mouth/ Comments on-line	☐6

13 What makes you aware of the games you buy?

Advertising	☐1(20)
Coverage in PC Zone	☐2
Coverage in other mags	☐3
Coverage on TV/radio	☐4
Word of mouth/ Comments on-line	☐5

14 Where do you typically buy your games software?

Mail order	☐1(21)
Retail outlet	☐2

15 If you buy games from retail, where do you shop?

Virgin/Our Price	☐1(22)
Future Zone	☐2
HMV	☐3
Game	☐4
WH Smith	☐5
Blockbuster	☐6
Woolworths	☐7
Supermarkets	☐8
Independent retailer	☐9

WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR PC

16 Approximately what percentage of time spent on your PC is taken up with playing games?

76-100%	☐1(23)
51-75%	☐2
26-50%	☐3
25% or less	☐4

17 What else do you use your home PC for? (Please tick all that apply)

Education/information	☐1(24)
Design/graphics	☐2
Music	☐3
Programming	☐4
Finance/organisation	☐5

18 Are you on-line?

Internet provider	☐1(25)
CompuServe	☐2
No, but I intend to be soon	☐3
No	☐4

19 Do you run Windows 95?

Yes	☐1(26)
No, but I intend to soon	☐2
No	☐3

20 What types of game do you play? (Please tick all that apply)

	Home	Work
Simulations	☐1(27)	☐1(28)
Arcade	☐2	☐2
RPGs	☐3	☐3
Graphic adventures	☐4	☐4
Strategy	☐5	☐5
Sports	☐6	☐6
Doom-style	☐7	☐7

WHAT YOU THINK OF MAGAZINES

21 Do you buy PC Zone:

	CD Issue	HD Issue
On subscription	☐1(29)	☐6
Every month	☐2	☐7
Most months	☐3	☐8
Regularly	☐4	☐9
Occasionally	☐5	☐0

22 How many other people read your copy of PC Zone?

None	☐1(30)
1	☐2
2	☐3
3	☐4
More than 3	☐5

23 On a scale of 1 to 5, how do the following elements affect your decision to buy PC Zone? (1: little or no influence, 5: very influential)

Contents of cover disk	☐(31)
What's reviewed	☐(32)
What's previewed	☐(33)
Feature content	☐(34)
Competitions	☐(35)
Contains hints for a game you have	☐(36)

24 How would you rate the following sections of PC Zone on a scale of 1 to 5? (1: crap, 5: excellent)

Bulletin (News)	☐(37)
Blueprints (Previews)	☐(38)
Games Reviews	☐(39)
Hardware Reviews	☐(40)
Budget Games	☐(41)
Cover Disc pages	☐(42)
Features	☐(43)
Troubleshooter (Tips)	☐(44)
PC Zone On-Line	☐(45)
Buyer's Guide	☐(46)
Mr Cursor	☐(47)

25 Which of the following magazines do you buy?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
PC Format	☐1(48)	☐1(49)	☐1(50)
PC Review	☐2	☐2	☐2
PC Gamer	☐3	☐3	☐3
PC Home	☐4	☐4	☐4
PC Power	☐5	☐5	☐5
CD-ROM Today	☐6	☐6	☐6
CD-ROM Now	☐7	☐7	☐7
MPC User	☐8	☐8	☐8
CD-ROM Magazine	☐9	☐9	☐9
Computer Life	☐0	☐0	☐0
PC Guide	☐x	☐x	☐x

26 **Is PC Zone better, the same, or worse in your opinion than the following mags?**

PC Zone is...

	Better than	*Same as*	*Worse than*
PC Format	☐1(51)	☐5	☐9
PC Review	☐2	☐6	☐0
PC Gamer	☐3	☐7	☐x
PC Home	☐4	☐8	☐v

27 **How do you rate our CD-ROM cover disc in relation to other mags?**

PC Zone is...

	Better than	*Same as*	*Worse than*
PC Format	☐1(52)	☐5	☐9
PC Review	☐2	☐6	☐0
PC Gamer	☐3	☐7	☐x
PC Home	☐4	☐8	☐v

28 **How do you rate our HD cover disk in relation to other mags?**

PC Zone is...

	Better than	*Same as*	*Worse than*
PC Format	☐1(53)	☐5	☐9
PC Review	☐2	☐6	☐0
PC Gamer	☐3	☐7	☐x
PC Home	☐4	☐8	☐v

ABOUT YOURSELF

29 **How old are you?**

701	Under 15	☐1(54)
702	15-17	☐2
703	18-24	☐3
704	25-34	☐4
705	35-44	☐5
706	45-54	☐6
707	55-64	☐7
708	65 or over	☐8

30 **Which of the following best describes your occupation?**

(Please tick one only)

601 Senior managerial/ senior professional	☐1(55)
602 Managerial/professional	☐2
603 Executive	☐3
604 Clerical	☐4
605 Work from home/ self-employed	☐5
606 Manual	☐6
607 Unemployed	☐7
608 Retired	☐8
609 In full-time education	☐9
610 Other	☐0

31 **How much do you earn a year?**

801 Under £10,000	☐1(56)
802 £10,000-£14,999	☐2
803 £15,000-£19,999	☐3
804 £20,000-£24,999	☐4
805 £25,000-£29,999	☐5
806 £30,000-£39,999	☐6
807 £40,000 or over	☐7

32 **What is your sex?**

Male ☐1(57) Female ☐2

33 **Do you have children?**

No ☐1(58) Yes ☐2

34 **Do you live...**

With your parents	☐1(59)
With partner/family	☐2
With friends	☐3
Alone	☐4

35 **How many other people in your house use your PC?**

None	☐1(60)
1	☐2
2	☐3
3	☐4
More than 3	☐5

36 **Where in the house is the PC?**

Your room/bedroom	☐1(61)
Lounge	☐2
Study	☐3
Other room	☐4

37 **What national newspapers do you buy?**

Times	☐1(62)
Guardian	☐2
Financial Times	☐3
Telegraph	☐4
Independent	☐5
Evening Standard	☐6
Daily Mail	☐7
Star	☐8
Sun	☐9
Mirror	☐0
Express	☐x

38 **Which of these do you currently drink at least once a week?**

Beer	☐1(63)
Wine	☐2
Spirits	☐3
None of these	☐4

39 **Have you personally spent at least £50 in the last 12 months on:**

Books	☐1(64)
Video tapes, blank	☐2
Video films, bought or hired	☐3
Records, cassettes, hi-fi	☐4
Photography, incl films	☐5
Home computing	☐6
DIY, tools & materials	☐7
Car accessories	☐8
Tools & plants for garden	☐9
Flowers & plants for house	☐0
Motorcycling	☐x
None of these	☐v

40 **Which of these do you – or other members of your household – have in your home:**

Electric cooker	☐1(65)
Gas cooker	☐2
Dishwasher	☐3
Video with remote control	☐4
Video without remote control	☐5
Television with teletext	☐6
Subscription cable TV	☐7
Satellite TV dish	☐8
CD player	☐9
Other hi-fi/stereo	☐0
Microwave oven	☐x
Computer	☐v
Fax machine	☐1(66)
Mobile phone	☐2
Car phone	☐3

41 **In which, if any, of the following sports and leisure activities have you actively participated in the past 12 months?**

Cycling	☐1(67)
Boating/sailing	☐2
Soccer	☐3
Rugby	☐4
Squash	☐5
Jogging/running	☐6
Golf	☐7
Skiing	☐8
Horseriding	☐9
Swimming	☐0
Tennis	☐x
Watersports	☐v
Motorcycling	☐1(68)
Badminton	☐2
Gym work (eg weights)	☐3
Cricket	☐4
Keep fit (eg aerobics, step)	☐5
Fishing/angling	☐6
Other sports	☐7
None of these	☐8

42 **Which of these best describes the highest qualification you have obtained up to now?**

Higher degree	☐1(69)
Prof. Qual. of degree status	☐2
First degree	☐3
HNC or HND	☐4
Quals requiring A levels for entry	☐5
1 or more A levels (or equiv)	☐6
ONC/OND/City & Guilds	☐7
5 or more O levels (or equiv)	☐8
Other O levels or CSE passes	☐9
Completed trade apprenticeship	☐0
None of these/not applicable	☐x

43 **Which of these do you have?**

Cheque book (personally or jointly)	☐1(70)
Access/Mastercard	☐2
VISA card (Barclaycard, TSB etc)	☐3
Switch/Other direct debit card	☐4
Diners Club	☐5
American Express (green)	☐6
American Express (gold or platinum)	☐7
Other gold, platinum or premier card	☐8
Other credit or charge card	☐9
None of these	☐0

44 **Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:**

	Definitely agree	*Tend to agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Tend to disagree*	*Definitely disagree*
I enjoy entertaining people at home:	☐1(71)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I make sure I take regular exercise:	☐1(72)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
All packaging for products should be recycled:	☐1(73)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I am not interested in what goes on under the bonnet of a car:	☐1(74)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Expensive bottled lager tastes no better than ordinary lager:	☐1(75)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Planning a holiday is something I enjoy very much:	☐1(76)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I believe nothing in life is free:	☐1(77)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I am very good at managing money:	☐1(78)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
I look on the work I do as a career rather than just a job:	☐1(79)	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

45 What type of game would you most like to see Microsoft producing? (Please tick one only)

Simulation	☐1(80)
Arcade	☐2
RPG	☐3
Graphic adventure	☐4
Strategy	☐5
Sports	☐6
Doom-style	☐7

READER'S SURVEY COMPETITION

To have a chance of winning any of the fabulous prizes on offer you must complete both the Reader's Survey and the following question. Then send the whole lot to:

PC Zone 1996 Reader's Survey
FREEPOST W07
Bristol BS12 0BR

Which of these is not a PC game?

Command & Conquer ☐
Sim City 2000 ☐
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Heh heh, heh heh... butt-munch. Heh heh, heh heh... weener. Heh heh, heh heh... Duncan MacDonald.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Beavis and Butt-head in Virtual Stupidity

WHEN I FIRST SPOTTED THIS, I instantly thought 'Oh no – naff bandwagon fodder alert', like a *Wayne's World* game or something. But, just in case you're thinking the same, let me inform you now that I was wrong. It's all 'proper'. The basic game plot was put together by game designers, after which the script was given to Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil, who wrote all the final dialogue. Then, ultimately, Mike Judge was drafted in to supply the voices of Beavis and Butt-head (incidentally, other voices in the game are equally recognisable). So the term 'as seen on TV' does, happily, apply.

Point-and-click

To veteran 'gamers' it'll probably be fairly evident from the screenshots that *Beavis and Butt-head* is a point-and-click adventure. And it is, in the Sierra rather than the LucasArts mould. But let us not forget about those folk who bought their computer only yesterday; in other words, here's a condescending, boring and explainey bit for simpletons.

Right, you control the entire game exclusively by the mouse. The on-screen cursor can be changed into different icons – action icons – which can then be 'used' on areas of your current location. It's completely simple: let's say that Beavis and Butt-head are in a shop. The possible actions (which are the same in all locations, by the way) are look, use/grab, walk, talk and inventory. So you spot a kid playing an arcade game by the wall. You want to know more, so you select the 'look' icon, place it over him, and click. Bzzzz. The CD is now accessed, and Beavis and Butt-head exchange observations. You now want to have a go on the videogame, so you select the 'use' icon and click it on the cabinet. Bzzzz. Now another dialogue is entered – sit back and enjoy. You decide you want to talk to the shopkeeper, so you select the 'talk' icon. A strip appears across the top of the screen, with pics of both Beavis and Butt-head. Which of the two do you want to speak? Or there may be a further picture, of someone or something else in the game, and you may require info on it. Click on your choice, and off the sequence will go.

Incidentally, all action icons have two states of animation: possible and not possible. For instance the 'talk' icon is a little 'word balloon'. If you hold it over something you *can* talk to, it'll contain an exclamation mark. If you hold it over something you *can't* talk to, it won't. This saves stupid people from spending an afternoon trying to talk to a chair. Oh, and I mentioned the 'inventory' icon back there, didn't I? Well, there are certain items within the game that can be picked up – the idea being that you 'use' them later on, in another place. The inventory is a screen where you keep all these 'puzzle' bits and pieces. Up to speed now? Thank God for that.

Yawn...

Yes, sorry, I know that was really boring. It's over now though. However, I should mention here that if you're not a Beavis and Butt-head fan, or you've grown tired of them, or you never found them funny in the first place, you may as well stop reading now. Right, now back to the game, which gets off to a cracking start with a bit of pre-orchestrated animation showing Todd (the tattooed tough guy) ordering a burger and fries. Working inside the Burger World drive-thru are Beavis and Butt-head (oh-oh), who giggle and hoot at the sight of their hero. Todd then kicks their butts slightly for not serving him efficiently enough and drives away. Beavis and Butt-head couldn't care less, though, because "Todd is cool". And "Tattoos rule". You know the drill. Then we cut to the physics class at Beavis and Butt-head's high school. They're staring out

(Right) "Hey Butt-head, science sucks!"

(Below) If you're not a Beavis and Butt-head fan, this is what you'll want to do to them...

head

through the window and witness Todd and a mystery person 'exchanging words'. A 'Todd could kick that wuss's butt' type conversation ensues, until Todd and the mystery person zoom off in their respective hotrods. Beavis and Butt-head ruminate... Butt-head: "We should go hang out with Todd's gang." Beavis: "Yeah. He'll like say 'Beavis, here, have some chicks' – heh heh heh." Butt-head: "This is going to be cool!" Ladies and gentlemen, the plot has started.

Game on

You're in the physics class, and it's time to point-and-click. For example, try out the 'look' icon on the horrible fat kid at the next desk...

Butt-head: Heh heh heh, it's Martin. *(Pause)* What a dork!

Beavis: Heh heh heh – yeah – heh heh heh.

Martin's working on a project that involves a monkey, so you click it...

Butt-head: Woah! It's your mum, Beavis!

Beavis: No way, butt-munch, it's a monkey!

Martin: *(Dorkishly)* Actually you're both wrong. It's a chimpanzee.

And on you go, clicking and chortling away, around the entire classroom. Like the blackboard for instance. 'Use' the chalk, and Butt-head draws a stick man with a very long 'third limb'...

Beavis: What's that, Butt-head?

Butt-head: It's like a scientific drawing of my weener, only smaller.

Here are their thoughts on the globe on Mrs Dickie's desk...

Butt-head: Heh heh heh – planet earth looks like a nad!

Beavis: Heh heh heh – you should see planet weener!

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX/33 (Pentium recommended)

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Note: Windows 95, double-speed CD-ROM drive (quad recommended) and Local Bus Video Card required

Butt-head talks to the teacher...

Butt-head: Er, can I like go when this starts to suck?

Mrs Dickie: No, Butt-head. Science never sucks.

Beavis: Are explosions science?

Mrs Dickie: In your case, no.

And so on. But you really want to join Todd's gang, which means you've got to get out of class and past the headmaster, who's guarding the front gates of the school (damn!). Cue four more internal locations, loads of brilliant dialogue, a couple of pretty easy 'puzzles', and one of a handful of tiny arcadey sub-games (the first one involves gobbing – yes, gobbing – accurately from a height onto moving objects below). Then, freedom.

Summing-up sucks

Momentarily removing my sense of humour , I'd have to say that *Beavis and Butt-head* is rather on the small side, as well as being quite easy – worth bearing in mind if you're, like, heh heh heh, a 'hardened adventurer with a beard'. But the enjoyment you get from this game – far more so than, say, *Sam and Max* – is based on what the tragic duo say and do, once you've initiated a sequence. Beavis cranked up on caffeine is a sight to behold; and there are dialogue gems, such as when they spot an 8mm cine projector: "Hey Beavis, check it out, it's like a TV from olden times." And then there are predictable but still funny set-pieces, one of which takes place in jail: Butt-head: "Where are all the chicks?" Prisoner: "If you're not careful *you'll* be one." Butt-head: *(Nervously)* Heh heh heh... heh heh heh... uh-oh."

I could go on quoting from the script forever, but I suppose I've got to get to the nasty scoring business eventually, so here goes: add five to the score of 87 if you're a Beavis and Butt-head nut who wants an interactive laugh; subtract five if you're just into puzzle solving). Z

The map

Leave a location, and up pops the overhead map. Where to now? At the beginning of the game, not all locations are visible, but once someone has told you about them, they'll appear. Use the 'look' icon on a location, by the way, and Beavis and Butt-head will fill you in on what's what...

A: Beavis: Isn't that the VETERAN'S HALL where all those old men hang out?

Butt-head: Heh heh. You just said *old men hang out.*

B: Beavis: Hey Butt-head, you think the FOODMART has that new videogame?

Butt-head: I dunno. They probably have some nachos though.

Beavis: Heh heh... nachos rule!

C: Butt-head: Cool! Let's hang out at the PARK!

Beavis: We could probably find something to break there.

D: Beavis: Do you think they have, like, coffee-flavoured nachos at the COFFEE HOUSE?

Butt-head: Beavis, you have, like, problems and stuff.

E: Butt-head: A man's HOME is his castle.

Beavis: Heh heh, and we can, like, watch TV and take a dump there too.

F: Beavis: I think I left my BURGER WORLD uniform at home.

Butt-head: I don't think we're, like, scheduled to work, Beavis.

G: Butt-head: *(Pompous voice.)* HIGHLAND HIGH – preparing the next generation for tomorrow!

Beavis: Heh heh, heh heh.

Butt-head: Highland High SUCKS!

Score

87

It's like being in control of your very own episode of *Beavis and Butt-head.* Heh heh, heh heh.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Software House: Viacom New Media
Tel: 0181-846 9433

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Left) Before the gruesome twosome get to join Todd's gang, they have to get past the headmaster.

(Far left) By the way, don't mistake the creep in the tennis gear for Todd – "Todd's cool".

By all accounts, Andrew Wright lost the battle of the bulge years ago – but as we're a forgiving lot we've decided to give him a second chance.

Battleground Ard

(Above) The unit descriptions at the bottom tell you its attack, defence, range, move, assault and morale scores.

(Left) In 1024x768, *Battleground Ardennes* looks really impressive.

IT'S COLD OUTSIDE. OKAY THEN, NOT as cold as it was back in the winter of 1944, I'm reliably informed, but bloody cold all the same. I disregard the freezing weather and pull the drawstrings on my Parka hood even tighter. I'm tough, I am. So tough in fact, I'll probably pretend to be a Waffen SS Stormtrooper when I'm in bed tonight. Oh, the life of a wargames anorak.

After a struggle to get the cellophane off the box (maybe I'm not as tough as I thought I was), all is revealed – it's a brand new wargame called *Battleground Ardennes*, from a brand new company called Talonsoft. A glance at the specs says it all: platoon-level action at 250 metres a hex. Aha! The word hex – this could be promising. I shove the CD-ROM into the drive, hit the installation routine, ask mummy to make me another Ovaltine, and away we go.

No change so far – pleasant green counter-like units for the Allies, light blue for the Germans, and some fancy coloured terrain with trees, roads and rivers. Hexes, counters and orgasms – what more could I want? *(Fantasies about Stormtroopers in bed, orgasms? I thought this was a review about a wargame! – Ed.)* Then I click on an innocuous-looking magnify button on the tool bar and... Wham! No more cardboard cut-out units on a flat 2D terrain; the counters are replaced by three-dimensional men, tanks, guns and half-tracks, while the trees, bridges and assorted buildings are transformed into realistic-looking objects, and the hills become elevated sections. Wow! This is good.

Half an hour later, I've calmed down. If, like me, you've been used to peering at *Squad Leader* boards, or the V for Victory series like *Velikye Luki*, graphics like these hit you right between the eyes – seeing a game come to life like this really is pretty impressive.

The Bulge

Battleground Ardennes is based on the Battle Of The Bulge, Hitler's final winter offensive between Christmas 1944 and January 1945. As a result, there's little leeway in the actions you can fight once you've exhausted the possibilities. All the pre-determined scenarios are based on three different maps of the area, and many take over where the preceding sequence of events left off – or would have left off if things had gone the way the history books say they should.

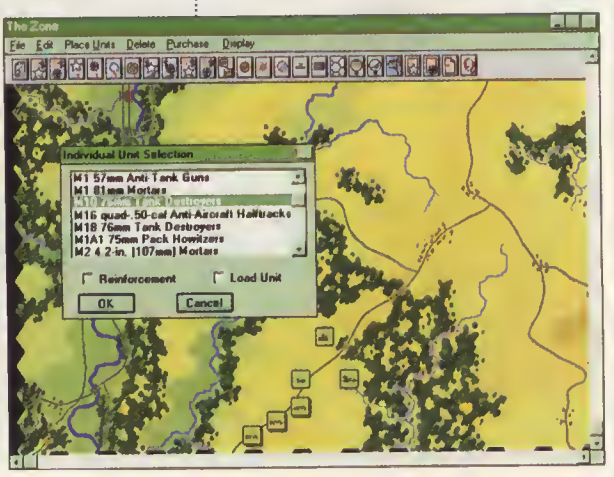
This means that the second scenario has much the same units as the first, albeit in slightly different positions with a few reinforcements here and there; the third scenario builds on the second, and so on. In my opinion, this makes for fairly dull wargaming; once you've got used to the three maps, there's not much left.

Play the Ardennes, or play the Ardennes...

Equally disappointing is the fact that you only have access to historical weapons and unit types, so even if you build your own scenarios, your choice is a little limited. No 'what if' storylines here, boys – you can't add the Brits or the Eyeties to spice things up a bit. And although most AFVs are represented (there are various tank destroyers, half-tracks, assault guns and so on), there still aren't many models to choose from. The Allied player can take his pick from Shermans, Stuarts or Chaffees, the German player from MkIVs, Panthers or Tigers. And the Sherman really is just a Sherman – variants such as up-gunned 76mm models or heavily armoured Jumbos are not included.

However, the scenario editor is a clumsy affair anyway. You have to select a fully-fledged unit such as a battalion

(Below) The scenario editor needs some improvement but at least it works.



ennes '95

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386DX/33
Hard Disk Space: 5Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse (essential)
Note: Requires Windows 3.1 or 95

or company and then add or subtract from it – there's no way of building a scenario from the bottom up without a fair amount of tedious clicking. As well as that, the toolbar icons are poor, and creating a decent battle takes an unnecessarily long time.

But on the plus side, *Battleground Ardennes* is a solid tactical wargame with plenty to hold your interest – it should keep hexheads happy for hours. After all, there are rules for off-board artillery bombardments, air and anti-air attacks, three different bridge types, burning wrecks and smoke shells, and varied visibility and realistic concealment rules. The relative weapon strength seems about right too: the Tigers make mincemeat of the Shermans and the 88s pulverise anything in sight, but mix your tanks up with enemy infantry and you're in the shit.

The Battle comes to life...

Of course the best part of the whole game is the unique 3D aspect. Not only does it look the business, it helps you plan moves a lot more easily. Although the line of sight rules are standard, the fact that you can see the terrain in front of you, rather than just guessing where it is, means that things are a lot clearer, especially when slopes and hill crests are involved. But having said that, I did have one niggle about the effect being spoiled by the grass, which looks bright green even where there is supposed to be deep snow and low visibility.

Hand in hand with the 3D look and feel is the 3D action. You don't just get a quick flashed message telling you what's happened – you actually get to see and hear the exchange of fire and watch the animated explosions. And if you're really lucky you get to see a tank blow up – although if you happen to be up against the old King Tigers, don't expect to see it too often... Anoraks will be delighted with the facility to watch AVI videos of their units firing; assault a hex and you'll see digitised newsreel of infantry rushing forward. Well, I like it, but you can turn it off.

Bulging at the seams

Battleground Ardennes is a Windows game that runs in any supported resolution; if you're planning to have a large scale battle, 1024x768 works best, but you don't get to see the units very clearly; on the other hand, if you opt for the 640x480 resolution you get to see the animated action but not the rest of the board. You can view units on or off their bases – you can even adjust the position of units in their hexes, but only for aesthetic purposes – it has absolutely no effect on gameplay.

One thing you can be assured of, *Battleground* is a reasonably enjoyable game. Okay, so the artificial intelligence doesn't quite rank alongside Einstein and that other important geezer, but then again it isn't the village idiot either. As always, the most worthwhile game is to be had attacking with the computer defending; try it the other way round and the enemy blunders straight into your killing fields. Then there's the fog of war option, that conceals enemy units that are out of sight, and a semi-automatic option that lets your units fire at will. If you're after a human opponent, there's a modem play option, but unfortunately it really is just that – there's no serial link or network facility.

Battleground Ardennes has limitations, namely a narrow range of units and scenarios and a mediocre manual, but it does add a new perspective to hex and counter wargaming. Pun intended... Z

Score

84

A real 3D hex and counter wargame like this has got to be worth something.

Price: £40 (TBC) **Release Date:** February
Publisher: Empire Interactive
Tel: 0181-343 7337

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

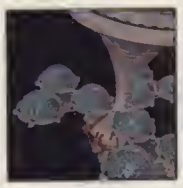
(Right) It's really easy to see what's what thanks to the excellent 3D perspective. It's 3D hex-tastic!

The Hive

A game about a seriously irritating itchy skin disorder? That sounds like a job for Patrick McCarthy, our very own little Camay baby.

IT'S AN OFT-REPEATED FACT THAT THE simpler the game, the more complex, ludicrous and/or overblown the plot will be to justify it. Your average point-and-click adventure, for example, with its myriad interweaving of plots and complex situations, will often just dump you in it with nary so much as a 'There's your character, there's your mouse, here's your control icons – get on with it, pencil dick'. But the common or garden shoot 'em up, which is hardly the most complicated format ever to be invented, always comes complete with a ten page scenario explaining exactly *why* you're repeatedly shooting all those funny-shaped gimps. So here's the one for *The Hive* (those who don't care can jump straight to the fourth paragraph).

The plot (sigh)



Several million years ago, The Ancients created a mutant strain of genetically engineered Hivasects (whatever they are) in order to produce a deadly bio-toxin. The deadly bio-toxin turned out to be very well made, as it completely annihilated The Ancients – which when you think about it, is sort of like a gang of stupid fly scientists developing a deadly insecticide, then jumping up and down in a frenzy on the nozzle. Maybe The Ancients weren't that bright after all, or maybe they were just old. About a million years later, their civilisation was rediscovered, their galaxy hastily placed into quarantine, their houses boarded up and their clothes given to Oxfam.

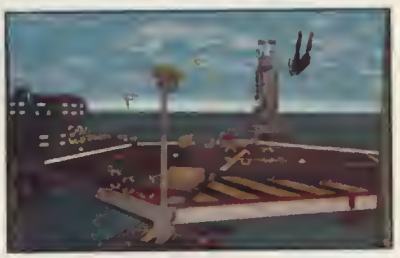
Unfortunately, a mob known as the Black Nexus Mob (because they all drive round together in identical cars, of course) have revived the Hivasects using an archived DNA sample, taken from a Hivasect Queen. *(Eh? – Ed.)* Honest. They then created an operational hive with the capability to produce enough bio-toxin to threaten the galaxy. It's good to see people learning from history.

Anyway, the whole thing gets a lot more complicated after that, so I didn't bother reading it all. And the upshot of it all is probably something along the lines of you having to shoot everything else. Let's just check... Yep.

It's Rebel Assault without the story

From there, you can more or less fill in the gaps yourself, according to whether you've ever seen a game on rails-style, pre-rendered shoot 'em up. Watch a cut scene, then get shoved into an action section, where you use your joystick to shoot stuff that chugs about in front of you, all the while being moved through splendid background scenery without having to steer. This particular one has bits where you fly about a lot and shoot stuff, bits where you have to guide the ship through perilous terrain and shoot stuff, and then bits where you take over a mounted gun and shoot stuff. Like all these things, it depends on your patience and/or determination to carry on.

You're set a task for a certain section, and the game automatically re-loads it until you succeed. This can, of course, be a handy device that allows you to continue without having to re-load the game every time – or it can be a total pain in the arse which leaves you cursing the designers and their first-born. On balance though, *The Hive* is a pretty good example of the genre – true, it does have incredibly annoying bits, but at the same time it also has what's known as 'quite nice' bits – but unfortunately something called *Rebel Assault 2* has just been released, which is rather better. *The Hive's* unique selling point is that it runs exclusively under Windows 95. Make of that what you will. **Z**



(Above) So what's *The Hive* all about then? Er, flying about a bit and shooting stuff.

(Right) More flying about shooting stuff.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major 16-bit sound cards
Controls: Joystick (recommended), mouse

Score

78

One of the better examples of its genre, but still a question of personal taste.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Funsoft UK **Tel:** 0181-748 7565

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

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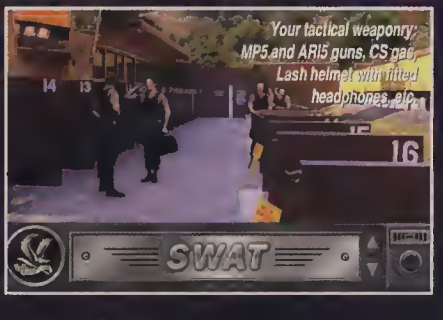

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The battle of the *Doom* clone heavies is about to commence. Enter stage left the first real contender for the *Doom* throne, *Future Shock*. Chris Anderson, resplendent in curly blonde wig and black frock, presides over the proceedings.

Terminator: Futur

(Above) The movie's post-apocalyptic atmosphere has been superbly carried over to the game.

OKAY, IT'S A DOOM CLONE, AND YES, I know you're all bored totally shitless with the things, seeing as how we seem to review at least one or two of them every month – but this one's different, honest. It's got a game engine that makes *Doom* look like the pretend 3D shoot 'em up it really is, and if that's not enough for you, you get to drive cars and fly futuristic vehicles and stuff like that, so don't write it off before we even get started, okay? Good!

Now, as I was saying, *Terminator: Future Shock* really is a bit special. It's all down to a new game engine that Bethesda has developed called Xngine which gives you full freedom of movement in a true 3D environment. This means you can explore the game area in detail: smash a crate open and you can look down to see if there's any goodies on the floor. And you can jump into cars and drive straight down the road while at the same time keeping tabs on where your enemies are by looking left, right and behind you. You can look up at the ceilings in the buildings and, if you're bored, sort of pirouette around the floor and get really dizzy. Basically, you can control your movements in almost the same way as you can in real life.

This brings a whole new dimension to the concept of playing a first-person perspective action game. If you've got a terminator coming for you it's fairly easy to take him out because he's just walking straight at you; however, if you've got a nasty looking flying robot thing hovering above your head and constantly jumping in and out of your line of sight, it really is another matter entirely. Whereas *Heretic* and *Hexen* let you look up and down just to show you how clever the programmers could be if they wanted to, *Future Shock* actually *forces* you to look up and down just to survive. So, you may have gathered by now that the game engine is rather special. And as luck would have it, so is the gameplay... Hoorah!

(Below) Polygons begone!

(Below right) Some of the indoor levels can be a little bit tricky, unless of course you've got an enormous gun like this one.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/66
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick
Note: 20Mb hard disk space required

Oh no, it's a movie tie-in

Oh yes, indeed it is, but fear not because for once the characters in the movie contribute significantly to the game's atmosphere. *Future Shock* is loosely based on the first *Terminator* film. This means you get to shoot terminators, walking robots, flying ships and flying circular things that look a bit like the tomato monsters from *Doom*, except they're futuristic and er, they don't have any teeth. Also, the movie's post-apocalyptic atmosphere has been transferred lock, stock and barrel to the game – as you walk around the landscapes you'll come across barren wastelands that were once thriving cities; you'll find that the sense of hopelessness and tragedy felt by any nuclear holocaust survivors is conveyed through the eerie music and excellent graphics that perfectly depict the game's war-torn landscapes.

As far as the actual gameplay is concerned, you can obviously make

Future Shock

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

(Left) This guy looks well hard, but that's only because, er, he is.

comparisons to *Doom*, but *Future Shock* doesn't really play like other *Doom*-type games because you're not constantly running around shooting everything in sight. You'll spend a lot of your time on each level exploring the map you're currently playing – this can sometimes take hours as the levels are absolutely enormous. Consequently, your time is usually divided between destroying the various enemies you come across, and trying to find out where the bloody hell you're supposed to be going.

This is the biggest problem – if anything, the levels are a little *too* big. This wouldn't be so bad if there was a half-decent automap, but unfortunately the levels are so vast that the programmers couldn't design an automap feature that tracks it in its entirety because it would have taken up too much memory. What you do get is a map showing your immediate environment which, frankly, is no great help. You can often end up in a position where you've despatched all the enemies on a level, only to find that you can't locate the exit.

Which reminds me of another little problemette: at the beginning of each level you are given a mission briefing which tells you where you're meant to be going, and what you've got to do when you get there. That's all very well except you can't press a key during the mission to remind yourself what your objectives are. A top tip kiddies: after every mission briefing, write down what your objectives are, or you'll forget and spend ages wandering around aimlessly.

One more minor gripe (and this could be my personal taste interfering here) is the soundtrack, which is sometimes too laid-back for the action. I'd prefer the music to rev up a bit when the combat starts, but you can't have everything I suppose. These probs aside, *Future Shock* is an excellent action game with mega fun driving and flying levels, loads of futuristic enemies to scrap with, moody graphics and plenty of variety in the levels. How it will compare to Apogee's new blaster *Duke Nukem 3D* when it comes out next month remains to be seen. Watch this space. Z

It mu… love …!

Yep, the *Terminator* movies are to Bethesda Software what the *Star Wars* series is to *PC Zone*. In other words, it can't get enough of them. Here's a brief synopsis of Bethesda's long-standing relationship with the *Terminator* license.

1992

Bethesda releases *Terminator 2029*, a strategy action game based on Arnie-type goings on. It was reasonably well received by the press but was slagged by some for needing what was then regarded as a high-end machine.

1993

Bethesda releases *Terminator Rampage*, a first-person perspective shoot 'em up which Bethesda claims was influential in the development of *Doom* (apparently iD showed a lot of interest in the production of this particular game at Bethesda's stands at various trade shows). Hmm, I thought iD's *Wolfenstein 3D* kicked it all off, but as *Rampage* was a bit crap it hardly matters.

1995

Bethesda releases *Future Shock*, its first game to fully explore the potential of the *Terminator* movie license. Of course, you know all about this one because you've been paying total rapt attention to this review, so I won't bore you with it again.

Score

85

Action, atmosphere and terminators – what more could you want? And don't you dare say *Doom*.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** February
Publisher: VIE
Tel: 0171-368 2255

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Charlie Brooker's own personal Quest For Fame saw him trying to sleep his way to the top. Top of the food chain, that is.

Quest For Fame

(starring Aerosmith)

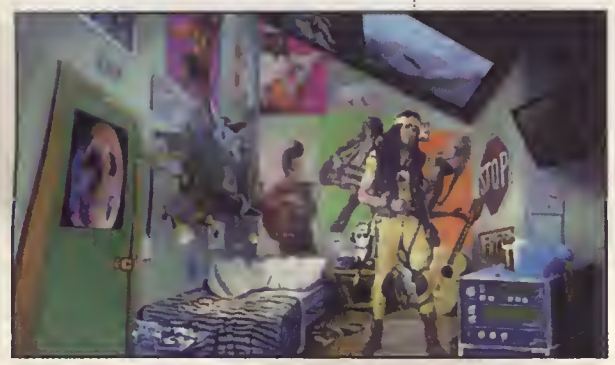
PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX or above
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse and V-Pick thingy
Note: Double-speed CD drive and Windows 3.1 or above required. An entire Virtual Guitar (complete with strings) is also available (in the US, at any rate). Wow. Gasp.

GIMMICKS: THE STORY CONTINUES. *Quest For Fame* is an FMV-packed 'adventure game' in which you have to make the leap from sad, unknown bedsit musician to world-famous billionaire rock star. Fittingly, the road to stardom is a rocky one, and to become a true rock 'n' roller you'll have to deal with riotous audiences, dead end nightclub spots, and grumpy studio technicians along the way. Ho hum. You're probably thinking: "I can imagine the rest – point-and-click adventure, overlong FMV cut scenes, tedious puzzles, yawn yawn yawn..."

And you'd be wrong. Because *Quest For Fame* comes with a cute little gizmo known as the V-Pick, a large blue plastic guitar plectrum with a lead coming out of it that you plug into the parallel port on your PC. Strum it against something (a tennis racquet is ideal, although any solid object will do), and wa-hey! In the very words of the game's intro, "You're playin' wailin' lead guitar!". Well, sort of, anyway. And you don't have to worry about notes – you just have to twang the thing at the right time, and the Virtual Music Technology (they're very proud of this) contained within the program will play the right chords for you. To help you along, there's a little rhythm guide along the bottom of the screen showing you exactly when to strum.



(Above) Jamming in the garage with your buddies. Don't pluck it up. Ho ho.

Finger pickin' good

You play along to a variety of different tunes (the majority of which, naturally, are Aerosmith numbers), accompanied on-screen by whoever you're 'rocking' with: this usually means your buddies – a bunch of airhead mall brats – but you'll also find yourself playing alongside cartoon characters, dead, ethereal rock 'dudes', and tacky lounge singers. The better you play, the further you progress; and if you make it to the end you're rewarded with the ultimate prize: playing a stadium gig with – gasp – *Aerosmith themselves!*

(Below) Play badly and Aerosmith will start getting a little shirty with you (bloody prima donnas). But then what do you expect, looking like a daft hippy – you may well ask how else do hippies look?

Now this probably sounds a bit crap, and indeed it really ought to be. But somehow, it all gels. It looks great, there are some genuinely amusing gags, and the cartoon animation is superb. Best of all, with a little plectrum practice you begin to feel as if maybe, juuuust *maybe*, you really are an 'axe god'. You start to get into it, which in my case is a miracle (see panel). It's fun, basically.

There are quite a few things to do, and since you can choose to play any one of four different 'parts' to each song – basic riffs, rhythm guitar, wailing lead guitar, or interminably wanky 'stunt' guitar (for metal musos) – it remains a laugh for longer than you'd think. It may be a gimmick, but at around 35 quid it's a lot cheaper than forking out for a real electric guitar – and you don't even have to learn to play the thing properly. How very '90s. Z

The twin miracles of Quest For Fame

Quest For Fame performs two very important miracles in one fell swoop:

1) Making Aerosmith seem cool
Now loads of you will probably disagree with me, but I hate Aerosmith as much as I hate... ooh, any other American you care to mention. But whereas the strains of *Love In An Elevator* usually have me gritting my teeth, spitting and making 'wanker' gestures, *Quest For Fame* soon had me strumming away with abandon – I even started to fancy myself a bit (which is hard, believe me). I also got into the rock dude 'surf speak' that pervades the entire game. This is indeed a miracle.

2) Preventing real-life metal bands from forming
Best of all, *Quest For Fame* should satiate the starry-eyed dreams of any Bon Jovi wannabes out there. Hopefully, they'll be too busy plucking their V-Pick at home to even think about forming a real band, and inflicting yet more bandana-wearing, feel-good, Yankee wank stadium rock on the rest of us. This isn't just a miracle, it's a genuine step forward for mankind.

Score

80

Burt Weedon, your days are numbered.

Price: £49.95 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: IBM
Tel: 01753 790700

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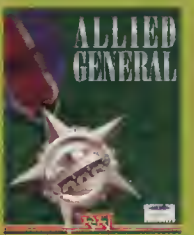

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William Shatner is not Captain Kirk – he's moved on. And from now on we can no longer call the fickle Paul Presley a sad *Star Trek*-obsessed anorak – he's moved on, and his new fixation is now *Babylon 5*.

William Shatner's TekWar

I LOVE IT WHEN UNTALENTED TYPECAST actors make a desperate attempt to increase their range *(Er Paul, be careful what you say; don't say you've never heard of the Trekkie Lynch Mob? – Ed.)*. William 'Sparky' Shatner got suitably miffed with everyone in his local high street yelling, "Hey Captain, show us your log", and so to address the balance recent years have seen him popping up everywhere, from Japanese car ads to TV police documentaries. Thing is, every time his face hits that big screen, all people can say is, "Coo-er, hasn't Kirk gotten old?" It's a bit of a sad affair when you think about it.

His latest attempt to throw off the shackles of the past was to write a series of average sci-fi books which have since been turned into a short-lived TV series (starring Shatsy-boy in a prominent role), and which have now been reborn in a game. A *Doom*-style game.

Ooh, that's novel...

William Shatner's TekWar (to give it its full title: to emphasis the Shatner bit his name and face appear all over the box, manual, disc box and game) is all about futuristic drugs and cyberspace. A bunch of TekLords (so called because Tek is the designer drug of the future) have hatched a plan to spread the drug through Cyberspace and turn the world into addicts – and it's your job, guided by Staccato-boy, to stop them.

To put an end to their dastardly plan, you run around a *Doom*-style portrayal of a modern city, hunting down the various Lords and gaining clues to their presence in the virtual world. Actually, this is quite a nice concept – taking a *Doom*-style engine and putting it in a real world complete with innocent civilians, other cops, roads, cars and even a subway system with working trains. Take your gun out, for example, and people start running for cover and pleading with you not to shoot them. I just wish it wasn't so tempting...

Back in the unreal world

The other side of the game is when you enter The Matrix (or cyberspace, to you and me). Think of every film and TV show that's ever portrayed a computer world – you know the sort, all neon lights, floating cursors and flashing things – because that's what you have here, and surprisingly, it works. The game has a convincing 'cyberpunk' atmosphere, and you come out wishing that if only the Internet could be the same (killer security programs aside).

It's just a real shame that the rest of the game isn't as plausible. The afore-mentioned 'real world' bits are a bit too much on the small side to be truly convincing, and the fact that they're only populated by about ten different people (from a graphical standpoint) just adds to the incredulity of it all.

(Above) The TekLords want to turn everyone into drug addicts... but then perhaps drugs would make the game a bit more enjoyable?

Other than that, there isn't really a lot to recommend it. From a gaming point of view it's no *Duke Nukem 3D*; from a graphical stance it's no *Quake* (although neither is *Quake* if our news pages are anything to go by); and plot-wise it's hardly classic science fiction (William Shatner wrote it, remember?).

If only the entire game had been set in the cyberspace section, suitably expanded and enhanced, it might have blazed a trail for decent hacker-style games. Unfortunately though, it just seems to want to jump on the *Doom* bandwagon and nestle snugly into its seat. Looking at the box, where Willy's name is in bigger type than the actual title of the game, gives you an idea of what to expect. If the inclusion of Shatner is a product's biggest selling point, you know you're in trouble. **Z**

(Left) "Don't shoot! I didn't write the damn thing, Kirk did!"

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick
Note: Despite the presence of a shiny spinning disc of death (if you sharpen the edges), William Shatner's *TekWar* requires *fifty* megs of hard disk space

Score

58

It tries hard, it really does...

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Capstone/US Gold
Tel: 0121-625 3366

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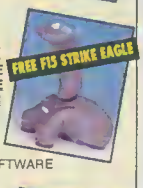
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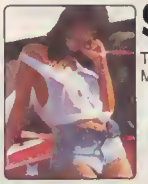

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Happy

New Year Mr Ponce

New to the world of PC games? Got a PC for Christmas and want to know what the essential buys are? Well, here's Patrick McCarthy with the lowdown on the games that will enhance those endless hours of quality leisure time.

So, you fell for the advertising campaigns and bought yourself a PC for Christmas in the fond hope that you'd soon be proudly standing in front of it, clenching your weedy little fist and saying, "Yes! We *got* that contract. Excellent!". And your beautiful wife would be having a good day at home busily producing bar charts showing exactly where, percentage-wise, your favourite socks are likely to be. And your blond-haired children (male, of course, as girls are *supposed* to prefer dolls and ironing) would learn all about what goes on inside a tortoise's shell thanks to the innovative new CD-ROM *Tortoise Insides*, and look up at you, their provider, with absolute and irrefutable love because *you* are *making them clever*.

But now it's Boxing Day, and you've already come to the realisation that the PC isn't actually a magical cure-all, and that although Crocus DumbSuite is all fine and dandy for making impressive presentations that, funnily enough, you never previously needed to make until you got a presentation package and found they were indispensable, for anything else it's actually... well, pretty dull. You want some fun. But your PC only came with those pathetic 1981 throwbacks that some firms like to shove in with Windows and call games, and you don't know where to start. And then you came across a magazine in WH Smith's that boasted that it would tell you all you ever needed to know about computer games. So you bought it, and now you've just started reading that very article, and we're more or less up to date. Now read on...

The games have been grouped and recommended according to the genres, and even though there are disputes as to where some of them should go, we just don't care – we're steadfast in our decisions. The categories also have a handy list of additional equipment that may be required to enhance your enjoyment of each type of game.

And in case you don't know what the terms used for the genres mean, there's a brief explanation, along with a rough idea of the type of person the game will appeal to. Don't worry about all that stuff you read in the tabloids about computer games making people more violent, introverted and fat – Rosemary West never had a computer, and just look how she turned out. No, excessive playing of computer games will only turn you into a socially dysfunctional moron if you already have the propensity to be one: it's no more likely to erode the normal person's social skills and ability to interact positively with their fellow humans than excessive reading, or excessive listening to Burt Bacharach records. Just ask any one of the *PC Zone* staff (but be prepared to wait for an answer, and don't be surprised if you don't understand it).

So, under 'additional requirements' you won't find a repetitive 'must be a sad git with no friends' type banality (well, not very often, anyway). But it's true that certain games do suit certain types of person. For example, where your organised, logical type will do well at strategy games, other, more simple-minded (some might say stupid) individuals would have trouble beating a Macacque Monkey fresh out of a lobotomy operation, so there's really very little point in their buying a strategy game. That sort of thing. But don't worry, you'll catch on. Enjoy.

Flight sim

Genre explanation

Fly about in a plane, shooting, missiling and napalming planes, maternity units, hospices and anything else that happens to take your fancy. Shout lots of stuff about slant-eyed spalpeens and moustachioed mad mullahs. Vote Conservative.

Additional requirements

£500 joystick with 93 extra buttons; silk scarf on a wire; Ladybird Book of Real Pilot Phrases; good memory for key-press combinations; Sellotape to keep cheeks held back for authentic 'G-Force' look.

Best game

EF2000

Ocean/DID, £49.99 (0161-832 6633)

Based on the airborne antics of the Eurofighter which, if it's ever satisfactorily finished at all, won't even be in use for another four years, *EF2000* gets the much sought-after balance between arcade game and simulation spot on. Choose between one-off missions or an on-going campaign mode in which missions are generated by an electronic battlefield system according to your own performance. Apparently the flight model's so good, it's being used to highlight design flaws in the actual plane, and real pilots are training with it. (But apparently it's also crap in bed.)

Also recommended

Purists might also want to try *Su27* which has a superb flight model but retro graphics. If you want to fly and die in space, *TIE Fighter* has you joining the Dark Side in *Star Wars* and hanging out in pubs with the Universe's Most Powerful Asthmatic. *Tornado* is excellent in a ground-attack sort of way, but it's also very complicated. If you want to fly but don't want to kill stuff, *Flight Simulator 5* and *Flight Unlimited* are both excellent and more let's-hold-hands-and-relate. For helicopter fans, *Apache Longbow* has the best 'flight model' (ie it's bloody hard to fly properly), but doesn't look that great, whereas *Comanche* gives arcade-style chopper fun and looks fab, is now available boxed with *Werewolf*, and allows for networked fun. »

Beat 'em up

Genre explanation

Pick a bizarre-looking, ludicrously dressed and overly muscular character. Go into the same room as another similarly specified character and beat 'em… well, up.

Additional requirements

Two gamepads with a twin joystick port; cricket box and gum-shield (optional, but we'd say essential), for when your chums get tired of losing and start the real thing.

Best game

FX Fighter

Philips/GTE, £39.99 (0171-911 3000)

A 3D polygon-based slug-fest that takes the world of the 2D sideways-on beat 'em up and batters it into a torn and bloody hulk. Characters come from a range of peculiarly-shaped aliens whose home planets will be destroyed if they lose (which should provide ample motivation). The more memorable characters include the basketball-breasted, scantily-clad cat/woman hybrid, the snappy-limbed insect and the man seemingly made entirely of dried faecal matter. It's chocka with swirly camerawork, dozens of secret moves and immaculately waxed bikini lines – and that's only the blokes.

Also recommended

Mortal Kombat 3 has over-the-top blood and guts but, for some, a dissatisfying level of combat. *Super StreetFighter II Turbo* provides more skill-based violence, but watch out for that Chun-Li's thighs – they'll turn your head into a marrowfat pea. It might also be worth waiting to see what the PlayStation's wonderful *Tekken* is like in its PC incarnation. And of course, if you read our other feature this month, you'll see *Virtua Fighter Remix*.

Strategy

Genre explanation

Start from small beginnings, plan all your finances and production of materials, balance your books and hopefully take over the world/universe/sweet shop industry.

Additional requirements

Patience; grim determination; complete lack of a social life; six boxes of Cheez Ums. It also helps to be under 5ft 8" tall, for added Misplaced Aggression Factor.

Best game

Ascendancy

Virgin, £39.99 (0171-368 2255)

Ascendancy takes all the best bits from just about every other god/strategy/war/space exploration game and then chucks them all together. Basically, the idea is to select a race of people, find and conquer other planets and manage those planets' resources to produce new technologies and further expand your empire, all the while indulging in diplomatic shenanigans which usually result in outright war. A brilliant game: very well designed, very deep, and very engrossing indeed.

Also recommended

Civilization is the grand-daddy of all strategy games, and takes you from the Stone Age all the way… to the stars! (cue music). Notable among the many million efforts to emulate its success are *Transport Tycoon*, and the sci-fi gems *UFO* and *X-COM*. For those who just like to build and plan cities, there's *Sim City 2000* and, finally, for those who like to build things that are almost guaranteed to make children throw up, there's *Theme Park*.

Strategy action

Genre explanation

Similar to Strategy games, but with a lot more real-time violence and general nastiness.

Additional requirements

Again, requirements are as for Strategy games, but it also helps to have a cunning tactical brain along with absolutely no scruples, sense of decency or mercy; think Ratko Mladic.

Best game

Command & Conquer

Virgin, £44.99 (0171-368 2255)

A sort of sequel to the excellent *Dune 2* that takes the gameplay to another stage entirely. It's far and away the best strategic battle game around (we haven't stopped playing it here in the *PC Zone* office), with battles taking place in real-time. You have to control troops, jeeps, tanks and troop carriers and attack enemy buildings, while at the same time juggling resources to produce new weapons like flame throwers, gun emplacements and mobile rocket launchers, and protecting your own installations. The one-player game is excellent and extremely addictive, but the superb networked multi-player option makes it an all-time classic.

(If you need help pounding the Nods, turn to our Troubleshooter section on page 104 for the second and final instalment of our *Command & Conquer* tips.)

Also recommended

Dune 2 has you mining for spice on Arrakis while fighting the other two Houses; *Cannon Fodder 1* and *2* are mission-based strategic shoot 'em ups; *Syndicate* has you controlling murderous cyborgs in an organised crime outfit with a view to world domination.

Doom games

Genre explanation

Games that have attempted to grab a little piece of the enormous money pie that the spooge-tastic *Doom* has created.

Additional requirements

Fast trigger finger; weeks and weeks of spare time; extremely hardy bowels.

Best game

Doom II

Virgin, £54.99 (0171-368 2255)

Do we really need to explain? Run about in scary rooms full of scary monsters, shooting the shit out of them with a variety of weapons, then tell all your chums how good you are and how you dream about it.

Also recommended

Descent is 3D *Doom* in a hovery spaceship, guaranteed to have you redecorating the floor with the contents of your stomach. *Dark Forces* is *Doom* with Imperial Stormtroopers and a multi-level, true 3D environment.

Doom spin-offs

Genre explanation

Like *Doom*, but with little extra bits to give it something… extra.

Additional requirements

More patience; lower testosterone level; more facial hair.

Best game

Hexen

GT Interactive, £44.99 (0171-258 3791)

Hexen, the follow-up to the disappointing and rather opportunistic *Heretic*, is *Doom* for people who don't feel foolish casting spells, don't mind working out far more complicated puzzles and don't mind back-tracking all over where they've already been to see exactly what happened when they stood on that trigger panel 35 miles away. And it's got different character classes, like an RPG (see genre, right). And it's a bit like *Doom* meets *Ultima Underworld*. And it's completely brilliant – but it's also a bit of a straddler between genres, hence it gets a genre all to itself.

Role-playing game (RPG)

Genre explanation

Take on the part of a character or control a group of characters, stroll about in strange, foreign lands, buy funny clothes, rest at inns, kill trolls, tease Mormons.

Additional requirements

All the usual jokes: gnarly yellow fingernails; a beard you can store food in; a name with no vowels and an apostrophe; jeans with no knees.

Best game

Ultima Underworld 1 & 2

Electronic Arts, £49.99 for both (01753 549442)

The first RPGs with street cred, these are first-person viewed adventures set underground in a hermetically-sealed, claustrophobic and peril-packed dungeon. All the usual violent interactions (slashing, hacking, spell-casting, salad tossing) are in real-time and there's an excellent automatic mapping facility that disappoints people who like graph paper.

Also recommended

System Shock is a space adventure, with body movements galore, futuristic weaponry and aggressive machines. The budget-priced *Ultima VII* is a more traditional RPG: collect a party of experts (mages, clerics, estate agents, aromatherapists) and set off on your Quest, across vast and perilous lands with only your wits and a sack of Class A drugs to aid you.

Point-and-click adventure

Genre explanation

Explore a series of locations, pointing at things with your mouse until something clicks inside your 40-watt brain and you have an adventure.

Additional requirements

An endless capacity (and desire) for combining seemingly unconnected objects in ever more peculiar ways.

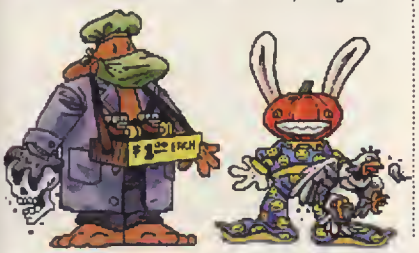
Best game

Sam And Max Hit The Road
US Gold, £45.99 (0121-625 3388)

Take one canine detective in a '40s-style suit with a dry sense of humour. Add one naked rabbit side-kick with an enormous set of fangs and a proclivity towards sudden bouts of uncontrolled violence. Mix in the sharpest script ever seen in an adventure game and some fiendish puzzles and you have the most challenging, stylish, entertaining, engrossing and genuinely funny adventure game around. The voices are perfect for the characters (check out the Woody Allen fisherman), the music is cheesy, the tacky tourist traps are great. It's getting on a bit, but still brilliant.

Also recommended

Discworld is funny if you like Terry Pratchett, but also very difficult. LucasArts' *Monkey Island, Monkey Island 2* and *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* are all old, but great.



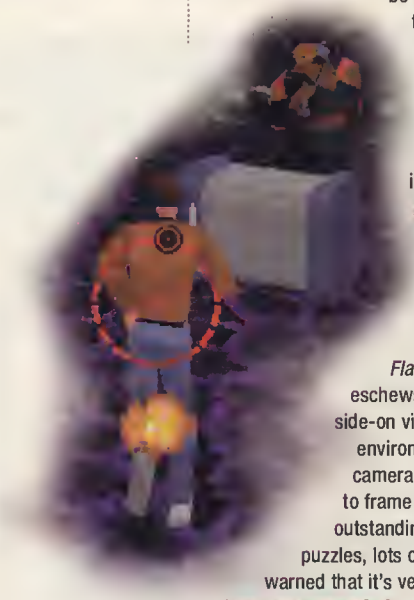
Arcade adventure

Genre explanation

Take your usual conventional puzzle-packed adventure game and add the chance to die loads of times.

Additional requirements

Genius – as in the old 'capacity to take infinite pains' definition – you've got to be able to come to terms with constantly being shot in the back of the head while trying to get the water-filled balloon from your inventory.



Best game

Fade To Black
Electronic Arts, £44.99
(01753 549442)

The follow-up to *Flashback*, which eschews the former's side-on view in favour of a 3D environment with multiple camera angles that change to frame the action. It has outstanding graphics, tricky puzzles, lots of gunfire, and be warned that it's very, very hard.

Also recommended

Equally gorgeous, equally challenging, but with more hand-to-hand combat is *BioForge* (and the hero doesn't wear white training shoes). And still worth playing, especially if you like pirates, witchcraft, the living dead and the wild west (sometimes all at once), are *Alone In The Dark 1, 2* and *3*.

EF2000

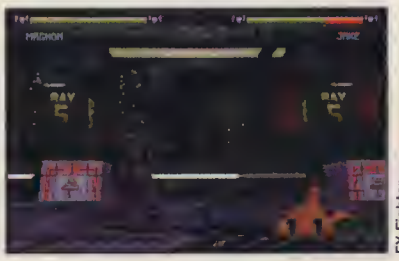
Ascendancy

Doom II

Command & Conquer

Fade To Black

Sam And Max Hit The Road



FX Fighter

Sports

Genre explanation

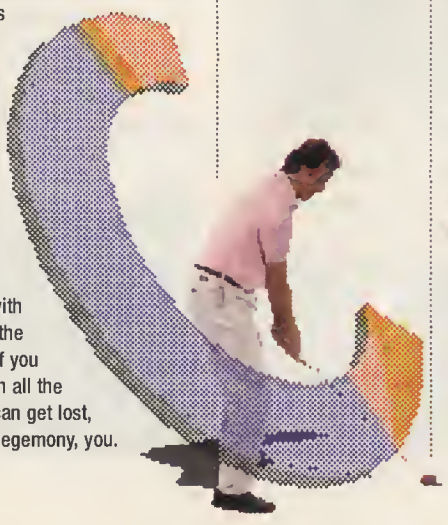
Easy – it's sport for lazy slobs. After all, you can play golf, soccer and so on, with little more than a bit of wrist-work.

Additional requirements

Liking for sport but an aversion to getting out of breath; beer belly; 12 cans of beer; nylon mesh baseball cap.

Best game

There's no one 'best sports game' as such. Golf is a battle between the pure simulation of *Links 386 CD* and arcade-style play but stunning graphics of *PGA Tour Golf 486* (last year's version, which is cheaper, has more courses and fewer unnecessary, and badly-placed, extra views). Best football management game is *Championship Manager 2* and, although all PC arcade football games have certain things wrong with them, *Actua Soccer* is the best of a bad lot. And if you want me to run through all the American sports, you can get lost, you victim of cultural hegemony, you.



Driving

Genre explanation

Get in a pretend car and pretend to drive as fast and dangerously as you like.

Additional requirements

Plenty of cash to pay for a £500 steering wheel and foot pedal set; neatly clipped moustache; undercoat-grey pastie shoes; suit jacket hanging on the wall beside your chair.

Best game

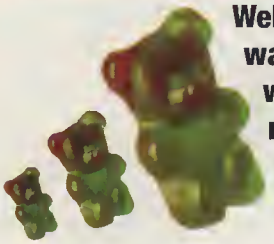
Formula 1 Grand Prix 2
Digital Integration, £16.99 (01276 684959)

The world's finest racing car simulation. Almost photo-realistic graphics, real-life GP tracks that are mapped to the millimetre, car set-ups that can be tinkered with to suit track and driving conditions, and difficulty levels that are infinitely-customisable and cater for anyone from budding Michael Schumachers to budding Damon Hills.

Also recommended

If simulated oval tracks are more your bag, *IndyCar Racing 2* is definitely the one for you. The original versions of both these games are also available at considerably reduced cost, and will run on slower machines. If it's arcade thrills you're after, there's *Screamer* and *Fatal Racing*, but if you just want to pose in posh supercars, get *The Need For Speed*. Z

PICK N MIX



Welcome to our new, regular round-up of all the miscellaneous titles that don't really warrant a full, in-depth 'going over' – all those little releases that clutter up the shelves without anyone really knowing where they've come from. Some are bizarre, some are mundane and... yes, you've guessed it, nearly all of them are crap. Join our special correspondent Charlie Brooker as he cuts a swathe through the jungle of software on offer down at your local PC games megastore...

ALIENS: A COMIC BOOK ADVENTURE

Publisher: Cryo/Dark Horse/Interactive/Mindscape
Tel: 01444 246333 **Price:** £39.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE 68

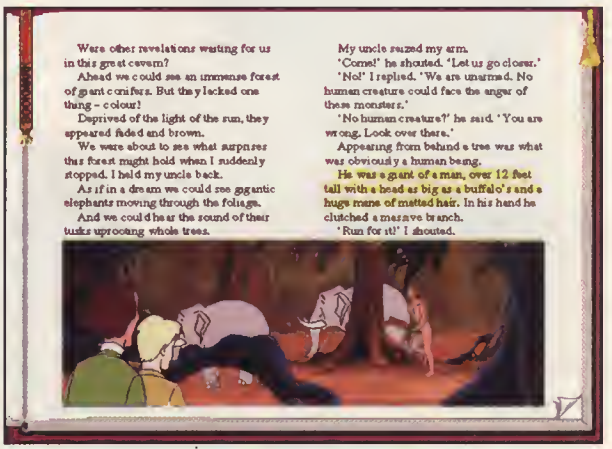
Aliens is another good-looking, yet ultimately dissatisfying release from Cryo, the French company that brought us *Commander Blood*. The visuals are stunning, atmospheric SVGA sci-fi scare tactics, but the gameplay is weak – plenty of point-and-click-and-watch-a-cut scene – and more dull aimless conversation than an entire season of *The Time... The Place...* Fans of the movies and strips may appreciate it, and it's good to see companies like Dark Horse (who produces a cracking range of comic books) getting involved in videogame spin-offs – but next time, can we have a proper *game*? Please?

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

Publisher: Europress
Tel: 01625 859333 **Price:** £TBC
Note: Windows 3.11 or above required

SCORE 78

This interactive 'talking book' was created using Klik n' Create, Europress' brand new multimedia application creation utility. What it does, it does well – you get a faithful re-telling of Jules Verne's classic story, accompanied by some nitty bits of animation, handy *Encarta*-style hypertext links to relevant information, and a wealth of little gizmos to click on. A worthy-but-ever-so-slightly-dull birthday gift for middle-class kiddiewinks everywhere.



Were other revelations waiting for us in this great cavern?

Ahead we could see an immense forest of giant conifers. But they lacked one thing – colour!

Deprived of the light of the sun, they appeared faded and brown.

We were about to see what surprises that forest might hold when I suddenly stopped. I held my uncle back.

As if in a dream we could see gigantic elephants moving through the foliage.

And we could hear the sound of their tusks uprooting whole trees.

My uncle seized my arm.

'Come!' he shouted. 'Let us go closer.'

'No!' I replied. 'We are unarmed. No human creature could face the anger of these monsters.'

'No human creature?' he said. 'You are wrong. Look over there.'

Appearing from behind a tree was what was obviously a human being.

He was a giant of a man, over 12 feet tall with a head as big as a buffalo's and a huge mane of matted hair. In his hand he clutched a massive branch.

'Run for it!' I shouted.

(Above) *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth* – it's talking-book-tastic.

(Above left) *Aliens:* "Listen, Mr Dentist, if you expect me to wear a mouth brace like this, you've got another thing coming."

MISSION CRITICAL

Publisher: VIE
Tel: 0171-368 2255 **Price:** £34.99
Note: Windows 3.1 and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE 70

Mission Critical is a point-and-click space epic, spanning three CDs and starring Michael Dorn of *Star Trek The Next Generation* fame (although you'll notice straightaway that his forehead's the right shape in this). So what's it like? Well, it runs in SVGA, it's got loads of interminable talking head cut scenes, and the interface is downright infuriating. Here's an example of what I mean: you're in a corridor with a nearby door; you click on the door, which gives you an option to open it. When you click on 'open' it tells you you'll have to face the door first, so naturally you turn to face the door and click again on 'open'. Then – and only then – will it tell you that the door was locked all the time anyway. Too much of that sort of messing about and you'll find yourself frowning so hard that you're in danger of resembling Worf yourself.

(Right) *Mission Critical:* Oi! Dorn! Nooooo!

MONOPOLY

Publisher: Hasbro Electronic Entertainment
Tel: 0181-569 1234 **Price:** £39.99
Note: Windows 3.11 or above required

SCORE 53

Yes, it's another pointless board game to PC conversion. This latest *Monopoly* incarnation features what can only really be described as a ludicrous amount of video cut scene tom-foolery, designed to drag the game (which is pretty slow-paced to begin with) right down to the bottom of the yawn-mire. However, turn all the bells and whistles off from the options menu, and you're presented with a decent conversion of the capitalist version of *Snakes And Ladders*. What *is* new is the option to play against other people via the Internet, or on a network (although why you'd want to do that when you could be out doing almost anything else is beyond me).

RAPID ASSAULT

Publisher: IBM
Tel: 01256 344173 **Price:** £39.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE 52

Another clunker. *Rapid Assault* is – wait for it – something that we're all craving madly, a *Quarantine* clone. Yep, somebody somewhere decided that what the PC really needed was yet another *Ooom-On-Wheels* thing. The engine is relatively smooth, but the game itself is tedium incarnate, and some of the graphics look like sixth-form impressionist interpretations of trees and buildings. Can I say anything in its favour? Er... it'll run on a 386, but that's about it. In summary: it sucketh.

(Far right) *Rapid Assault:* a veritable monument of suckism.

(Left) *Thomas The Tank Engine Pinball:* Wahey! Now, where's Ringo Starr?

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE PINBALL

Publisher: Alternative Software
Tel: 01977 797777 **Price:** £16.99

SCORE 65

Yes, yet another bloody pinball game, and a stupifyingly twee one at that. Aimed at young children or wayward students on Class A drugs, this collection includes four simplified pinball tables (no gutters!), each featuring the loveable (apparently) creations of the Rev W Awdry (the charming-yet-annoying TV series theme tune can be heard tootling away in the background). Developer Spidersoft knows its onions when it comes to pinball games, so the scrolling's smooth (although the ball dynamics leave a little to be desired at times) and it all looks pretty enough. But come on now, really. Don't you think that your kids would rather be playing on a proper grown-up 'man's table'? One with gutters. And a pint of beer resting on it. And a name like *Hell's Angel Robot Assault.* Or something, anything other than *Thomas The Bloody Tank Engine.*

TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Publisher: Hasbro Electronic Entertainment
Tel: 0181-569 1234 **Price:** £39.99
Note: Windows 3.11 or above required; this is a game for two players or more

SCORE 68

Another family favourite gets the multimedia makeover – and compared to *Monopoly*, '*Triv*' has fared a little better. It's stuffed full of video clips and audio snatches to jog your memory and grab your attention, and as it's a special edition aimed at the UK there are no obscure Gilligan's Island questions. But it's all a little *too* British – lots of posers about the Royal family and the like – but if you really *have* to play *Trivial Pursuit* on your PC, well, now you can. *You Don't Know Jack* is more fun, though.

TROPHY BASS

Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Tel: 01734 303322 **Price:** £34.99
Note: Windows 3.1 or 95 and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE 50

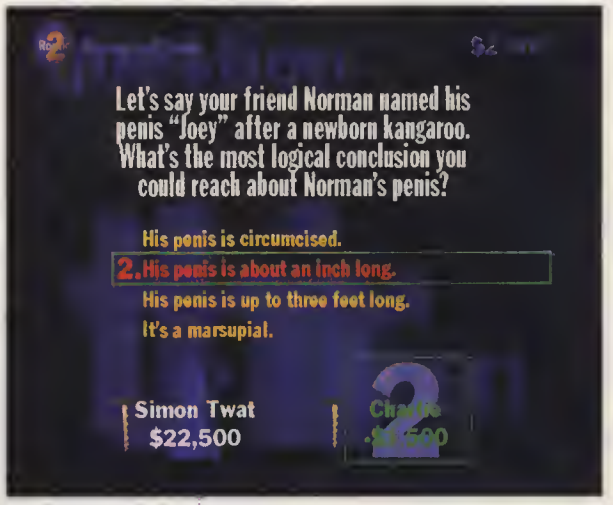
Er... that's right, the title is enough of a clue – *Trophy Bass* is a fishing game, for Windows. Now, since I find the mere thought of fishing about as enticing as a sexual come-on from the undead remains of Arthur Negus, it was a fair bet that this wasn't exactly going to set me aflame. It looks rather nice though, and if you're really, really into your bass fishing, then I dare say you should consider owning a copy. You can select rods, reels, lines, lures and bait, pick a lake and fish yourself silly. It creates a 'Virtual Lake' which you can row around, find some bass, and then try to land 'em; there's even an on-line 'How to Fish' guide chucked in. And since the whole game chugs along at about 0 miles an hour, it's as ambient as the real thing. The Americans are all bass-mad, on this evidence. Um... next!

ULTRA PINBALL

Publisher: Sierra
Tel: 01734 303322 **Price:** £39.99
Note: Windows 3.11 or above required

SCORE 40

And still they come, which begs the question of just how many more pinball games are going to be released and how many more we can stomach. This one goes by the name of



(Left) *Trivial Pursuit:* "Um, oh... I think I know what it is... it's right on the tip of my tongue... oh... is it a horse's penis?"

(Above) *You Don't Know Jack* is packed full of sniggering juvenility such as this. And it's totally, utterly fab.

(Left) *Trophy Bass:* That's it, go on, nibble the end... uh. Go on, bite it! Bite my worm!

(Below) *Ultra Pinball:* That deaf, dumb and blind kid sure plays a mean pinball. He's shit at table tennis, though.

3D Ultra Pinball, and runs under Windows. It isn't exactly 3D, and it certainly isn't 'Ultra'. In fact, if it fell foul of the Trade Descriptions Act, it'd probably have to be re-christened *2D Nice-To-Look-At Dreadful Ball Dynamics Boring Layout Piss All Fun To Be Had Here Pinball.* It's very easy to get stuck in a never-ending loop, the ball's too big and moves too slowly, and the table design displays all the flair and imagination of the average bank statement. Swerve sharply to avoid.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

Publisher: Berkley Systems/Softline
Tel: 0181-401 1234 **Price:** £TBC
Note: Windows 3.1 or above and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE 80 RECOMMENDED

Bloody hell! A genuinely amusing game from the Americans! *YDKJ* is a game show for Windows. Up to three players can compete at once, answering a seemingly inexhaustible supply of bizarre trivia questions. The design is simple yet sassy, and some of the questions on offer will make you laugh out loud – the game's humour is a refreshing mix of playground sniggering, embittered cynicism, and trash culture worship. This is the funniest game of the year so far, and an excellent diversion when you've got a couple of mates round. Be warned however – a few of the questions are so colloquially American that they're rendered almost unguessable. And in one-player mode, it's more than a little sad. Z

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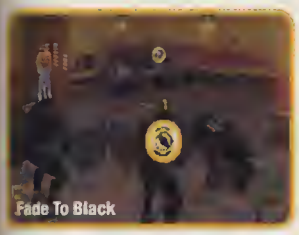

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Budget games and beyond as Paul Presley joins the incorrigible Tony Split, the man who makes the NHS look like some kind of crazed money-spending beast. And this month he's focusing on... compilations.

Tony Split

He's a tightfisted git.

The scene: Paul is sitting quietly in the lounge reading an important fax. Tony slouches in.

Tony: All right, Paul. *(Sniff, cough, wheeze)* Borrow me a fiver?

Paul: *(Waving the fax)* No time for our usual mindless sitcom-style tomfoolery Tony – we've got work to do. Apart from all the usual budget software we've got to review, we've just received reports that there's a horde of extremely angry compilation software steaming towards us over the horizon!

Tony: *(Instantly springing into action)* Holy Kajagoogoo! You take the budget stuff Paul, I'll deal with the round-ups. To the Reviewmobile!

(Which leaves the non-dynamic duo to run off, sporting capes and dodgy underwear.)

Machiavelli The Prince

That Sid Meier, eh? Whatta guy! Thanks to his unique 'unfolding map' antics in *Civilization*, strategy games have never been the same. *Machiavelli The Prince* is just the latest in a long line of games to nick, ahem, pay tribute to the style by using it to simulate life in the hurly-burly days of the fifteenth century. Trading, global exploration, politics that make our government look like the most honest in the world – *Machiavelli* is a class product that takes the whole *Civilization* set-up and turns it into a game that grips from the word go. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but if *Civ*-type strategy games are your thing, you're going to love it.

SCORE ●●●●
PRICE £16.99
MicroProse 01454 326532

Legend Of Kyrandia

Back when adventures were a dime a dozen, we'd see a lot of this sort of thing. Everyone was trying to make games that looked either like a Sierra or LucasArts product, and this was one of the former. Trouble is, no one really knew how rocky the Sierra route was going to be, and as such the games that followed this path were all very pretty, had lots of gloss and frills, and even contained some tricky puzzles – but none of them had stories that could hold the attention for longer than five minutes. *Kyrandia* is one such beastie.

SCORE ●●
PRICE £12.99
Virgin 0171-368 2255

Frontier: Elite II

Wooh hoo hoo! This is going to be fun. The *Elite* saga never seems to end, does it? Despite serious bugs, suspected legal wranglings between the authors, public opinion that rates somewhere between pond scum and the flu virus, and some of the worst press since Will Carling said, 'I wonder if *The Sun* knows about us?', Gametek is re-releasing *Frontier* onto the market. This isn't, I hasten to add, the unplayable *First Encounters* sequel, just the first sequel – the one that is playable to a certain extent but does show itself up in the long run. You don't need me to review it for you because you all have your own opinions about it. I won't even score it since a mark would be completely subjective. You're on your own with this one, kids.

SCORE We'll let you decide!
PRICE £9.99
Gametek 01753 553445

Goblins 3 (Gobliiins)

You have to feel sorry for Coktel Vision. While Cryo, Delphine, Infogrames et al are all making massive headway in the world of stunning computer games, Coktel Vision keeps plugging away but unfortunately never quite seems to get it right. Perhaps it's the collaboration with Sierra? Someone should really have mentioned something. Anyhow, *Gobliiins* is the third outing for its cartoon puzzle series and while it's all very jolly and fun on a surface level, like so many of CV's products, it doesn't do enough to keep you going for too long. Average McAverage would be its Scottish name.

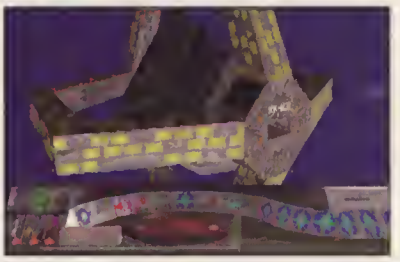
SCORE ●●●
PRICE £9.99
Sierra 01734 303322

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

Hmm, Dennis Hopper really will star (and note that I use the word advisedly) in anything, won't he? *Hell* is one of those flash-bang-wallop, all-singing, all-dancing, ahem, Interactive Movies. That's right, stunning graphics, sod all gameplay. In fact there's even less than

MACHIAVELLI THE PRINCE ●●●●

FRONTIER: ELITE II



GOBLINS 3 ●●●

HELL: A CYBERPUNK THRILLER ○

that here. It all takes place in some kind of future where Hell has merged with Washington (well, it was only a matter of time) and people talk a lot. And talk. And talk. And that's all they do. Please, please make them stop before I feel the urge to kill again (*Uh oh!* – *Ed.*).

SCORE ○
PRICE £12.99
Gametek 01753 553445

COMPILATIONS

The Essential Collections

These are three packages categorised by the labels Sport *(PGA Tour 486, F1GP* and *FIFA Soccer)*, Flight *(192 Pacific Air War, Fleet Defender F14* and *Wings Of Glory)* and Business *(Transport Tycoon* and *Theme Park)*. Thanks to a collaboration between EA and MicroProse, these absolutely stunning quality collections include some of the greatest games of the past half year or so. If you were looking for the deal of the month, this is it.

SCORE ○○○○○ (for all)
SPORT £34.99
FLIGHT £34.99
BUSINESS £39.99
Electronic Arts 01753 549442

World Of Combat

This really is a superb collection from Novalogic. The pack includes *Comanche*, a brilliant arcade helicopter sim which provides a welcome break from all those serious 'propeller head' flight sims, *Armored Fist*, an action-packed tank sim, and *Wolfpack*, a good looking submarine strategy game that will keep you happy for ages. All this for thirty quid too. If you don't own any of these titles, run to the shops and get this collection now.

SCORE ○○○○○
PRICE £29.99
Novalogic 0171-607 9707

CD-ROM Interactive Collection Volume 2

You may remember Volume 1 of this series a few months ago (at least you should do, as it sold over 50,000 copies). This one contains all sorts of desktop publishing software, reference works, art packages and games games GAMES! – including *Man Utd The Double, Terminal Velocity, Heimdall 2* and *Journeyman Project Turbo*. Yes, it's one of those 'Christmas packages', the ones your parents buy you because they think it's got a bit of everything. And as far as value goes, it's not bad at all, even if the titles aren't particularly stunning.

SCORE ○○○
PRICE £varies
US Gold 0121-625 3388

Power, Corruption & Lies

Virgin's highly amusing advertising campaign for this one belies the fact that the four games it contains are seriously good (*That was just terrible – Ed.*). *UFO*, as we may have mentioned before, was one of the best strategy-style games to appear for ages, *Fleet Defender: F14* (also available above) is still going strong, *Dune 2* was raved over about two months ago (and is still just as good – think of *Command & Conquer* in space) and *Beneath A Steel Sky* was the second Virtual Theatre title to come from Revolution software, and was vastly superior to *Temptress*. Another top quality collection.

SCORE ○○○○
PRICE £34.99
Virgin 0171-368 2255

Definitive Wargames

Roll out the anorak brigade, their ship has finally come in. I'm not going to list all the wargames on offer here, firstly because there are 12 of them, and secondly because they all have names like *Decisive Battles Of The American Civil War 1, 2 & 3* and *D-Day: The Beginning Of The End*. It's enough to just say that this is a mixture of historical games, fantasy games, futuristic games, scenarios, wargame construction kits and so on and so on, ad infinitum, ad nauseam. This collection should definitely appeal to those sad people who have patches sewn onto the elbows of their cardigans.

SCORE ○○○
PRICE £44.99
Mindscape 01444 246333

Paul: Job well done, Captain No-Cash! Once again the innocent punters of Gamesville can rest easy in their beds, safe in the knowledge that budget and compilation software will be earnestly reviewed by ourselves.
Tony: Too true, faithful sidekick. And do you know what's really interesting, Cliché Boy?
Paul: What, Captain? That all these titles are out just in time for Christmas past?
Tony: No.
Paul: That the best of the whole bunch are either *Machiavelli The Prince* or the *Essential Collection* range?
Tony: No.
Paul: Or that right now has never been a better time to add these titles to your collection?
Tony: No.
Paul: What then? Tell us, go on, tell us.
Tony: Okay then, you asked for it: I think that these linking segments are starting to get extremely tenuous and that we really should leave before the editor gets fed up and fires us.
Paul: Yeah. Let's get out of here.
(They wander off into the sunset)
Tony: Anyway, I've had about enough of all this stupid cape malarkey – you know these bloody tights are starting to ride up into me crotch... Z

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It hath height and width and now, my, it hath depth too. Why then, it'll be 3D.

David McCandless and David Mathieson check out the possibilities of the latest height-width-depth accelerator boards.

UH-OH CHAPS, WE'RE ON THE cusp of another format war here. Remember VHS versus Betamax? Ouch, that was a bit of a nasty one. Remember CD versus vinyl? We didn't have much choice about that. And what about PCI versus Vesa Local Bus? Hmmmm? Not content with introducing a load of new bits and bobs we gamesplayers are supposed to be concerned about (EDO RAM, six and eight-speed CD-ROM drives, Pentium 150, MPEG cards et-bloody-cetera), hardware developers are about to swamp us with yet another 'choice': which 3D graphics accelerator board?

Every graphics manufacturer and its grandmother seems to be 'about to' launch such a card – you may have heard of a couple of them already: the mythical Glint, the well-publicised 3D Blaster from Creative, and the nattily-named Diamond Edge from the makers of that most famous of graphics cards, the Stealth 64. Less well-known but still impending are extended 3D capabilities from Matrox (in its Millennium series of cards), Trident (who is making a set of new custom chips), Orchid (who has put its money behind a chipset from Voodoo graphics), and the surprising coupling of Yamaha and Western Digital (its card is apparently pretty 'good'). Even our old German friend Miro has one in the pipeline. And while these may have less 'presence' at the moment, they are nevertheless receiving nods and winks from the games makers.

But, ultimately, the question is why? Why do we need these new cards? Isn't our favourite friend the Pentium more than capable of handling these new-fangled modern games? Well, not really. The Pentium and its right-hand man, the local bus graphics card, may push Windows 95 around at a fair old whack, make *Doom* oily smooth, and barely break pace running *Command & Conquer* (in background), but... you know how it is...

Well, in case you don't, I'll explain: you buy a game. Let's say it's *Flight Unlimited*, okay? (It could just as well be *IndyCar*, or *Apache Longbow*, or *Actua Soccer*.) The screenshots in the mags look great in Super VGA. The advertisement says "glorious SVGA 640x400". The game is more or less screaming at you to play it in SVGA. So you buy it. And you load it up. And can you play it in SVGA? Can you hell. Yes, it runs fine in 'normal' 320x200 mode but looks a little blocky. You switch to hi-res mode and bang! 5 frames per second if you're lucky, 1 fps if you're not. Very good-looking but very slow. All the people you had gathered around your Pentium 90 Ninja Death-Station start to smirk, then giggle, then laugh with uncontrollable mirth. They roll down the aisles, their ribs snapping like dry twigs, puking with hilarity. And you're feeling just a little embarrassed.

How do you say 'Gouraud' anyway?

The problem basically lies with polygons and texture-mapping. A lot of games these days are dropping the usual 'bitmapped sprites' (flat pixel-based graphics such as the monsters in *Doom*) for 'polygon rendered' moving graphics. A monster built up with polygons can look very much cooler than a sprite, plus there's the added advantage that it doesn't need to be redrawn for every direction it can face. Not only does this make 3D-o-rama games such as *Descent* and *Quake* that much more feasible, but animation techniques like rotoscoping (where an actor's movements are all recorded and translated via a very special 'magic box' into 3D motion) can be achieved, making polygon-based characters look and move extremely realistically (just take a gander at *Virtua Fighter* in the arcades, or *Tekken* on the Sony PlayStation). Unfortunately, to make a bunch of, well – triangles – look exceptionally cool, they have to be texture-mapped and light-sourced as well, in order to avoid the flat, boring 'computery' look. And here's the rub:

(Right) Go, Sarah, go! Stop messing about and give that robot HELL!... For a perfect example of what this feature's about, check out *Virtua Fighter Remix*, which is only available bundled with the Diamond Edge graphics card.

(Below) Better-than-Pentium-performance? *NASCAR Racing* is one of the top games that Creative is planning to bundle with its 3D card.

The start of a 3D format war?

Creative 3D Blaster

If it turns out that there's a 'format war' between the different 3D card standards, many people's money will be on Creative Labs, for no other reason than the fact that it already knows about setting hardware standards with its most excellent SoundBlaster range.

The first version of the card to be released will be for VL bus PCs, the rationale behind this being that all those 486DX2 owners out there could do with a bit of help. A PC fitted with such a card can expect better-than-Pentium performance with the right software, and to illustrate the point, Creative is bundling a suite of specially-written games, including *Magic Carpet, NASCAR Racing* and *Flight Unlimited*. The PCI version is expected in early 1996.

With such a pedigree behind it, it's no surprise that Creative is having few problems recruiting developers to its cause, which means you'll be able to expect plenty of releases from the likes of Bullfrog, Mindscape, Papyrus, Ocean and Virgin, among others. The card itself is expected to cost around £300.

Trident

Trident is already well known as a manufacturer of graphics chipsets, and will be entering the 3D arena shortly. While it won't be making finished products, its 3D chipsets are set to be used by some pretty major PC manufacturers, and it's working closely with software developers to ensure that games will be able to take advantage of the accelerated functions that it will be providing.

Matrox Millennium

Matrox wins the race as far as getting products out is concerned, although there aren't any games out yet that utilise the Millennium's 3D capabilities. A spokesman from Matrox told us that the company is liaising with games developers, although he doesn't expect things to really start moving until Microsoft releases its Direct3D API (see glossary). Like the 3D Blaster, the Millennium uses an on-board Z-buffer, and is available in either 2 or 4Mb models, costing £249 and £359 respectively.

The Programmer's six inches

Yeah, yeah, but no matter how funky the packaging is or however many zillions of polys the card is capable of spooging around the screen, if the games developers don't like it, then it's finished. We contacted the Gods of the UK progremming scene, otherwise known as Bullfrog, and talked to Glenn Corpes, King Coder on *Magic Carpet* and 3D expert extraordinaire. Here are his thoughts on the cards he has seen thus far:

3D Blaster

"We've converted *Magic Carpet* and *Hi-Octane* to this, and it does make them run in hi-res at well over twice the speed they did in software on a 486/50. Unfortunately though, these games were only running at 5 or 6 frames a second in hi-res on a 486/50 in the first place, so it takes a 3D Blaster to make it playable on these machines. On a Pentium 90 the speed-up is much less, maybe 30-40 per cent, but you have to remember that most fast Pentiums have PCI motherboards and the initial 3D Blasters are VLB. Creative says that the PCI version will be much faster, because of DMA or something – we'll find out in January. All of the above figures are also for 16-bit colour, something that would be almost impossible to do fast in software. A game written directly for the 3D Blaster could be significantly faster than our conversions, as would some other games. I saw an early version of *Descent* running on it a few months ago and it looked awesome."

Diamond Edge

"Totally awesome but totally alien, sort of works like a souped-up Saturn with the ability to curve its texture maps. Their version of *Virtua Fighter Remix* looks amazing." *(We agree – Ed.)*

RealVision

"I've heard a lot of good stuff about this from Electronic Arts and other places; apparently *Quake* runs at over 30 fps on it in hi-res."

Direct3D

"My guess is that *if* Direct3D takes off (it will do if it's any good), someone will design a card to accelerate *all* of its features (in the same way that the best Windows accelerators speed up all the boring box draw and font stuff), and this card will seriously kick the shit out of everything else. At this point everyone will move to Direct3D as it will be faster than anything you can do with software, no matter what sneeky *Doom* tricks you're using. Until that point I think some people will steer clear of it to allow those sneaky tricks. I know we will."

mapping and shading are unfortunately computationally expensive, demanding a lot of mental arithmetic of complex maths from your CPU. It can handle it to a certain extent, but once it starts dealing with the sound, refreshing the screen, paging memory, computing positionals, loading data, managing interrupts, and taking input from your keyboard, *and* dealing with all these polys, things start to get out of hand – or, translated into plain English, it falls over. In SVGA, it's handling twice as many pixels, twice as much data, so it performs half as fast, or slower. The result: 1 frame per second.

Hence the need for dedicated 3D graphics accelerators which basically lift the burden of calculating polygons, texture-mapping and rendering from your computer's overheating Intel brain. The latest super-consoles have chips built-in to do this legwork, and are specially designed to make you drool yellow saliva, and to make the PC look shit. Compare *FX Fighter* on a P90 to *Virtua Fighter* on the Saturn, or *TohShinDen* on the PlayStation to see what we mean. It makes you sick. But now, at last, the balance may well be redressed (in pink raytraced panties and a low-cut texture-mapped string vest, we hope).

(Above and above right) We know you're going to want to get your hands on a 3D card now in anticipation of the added enjoyment it'll bring to titles like *Quake* and *Descent* – but you're better off waiting for the dust of the price and format war to settle first...

What about 'Phong' then?

With that in mind, we've gathered together some bumpf on the latest 3D cards coming your way. Some we've seen going, some we haven't, but you should be aware that this is not a battle you can afford to be standing in a circle around shouting "Fight! Fight!" and pushing the competitors back into the ring if they try to wuss out. Pretty soon, it's a fact that all games will be running under Windows 95. True. All games will be 3D-based. True. And soon you'll need to fork out your hard-earned for some additional hardware, if only to keep your PlayStation-owning chums quiet for five minutes. Sad, but true.

To make things a little more complicated, (sigh) Microsoft is intending to release a thing called Direct3D next year. It's a set of programming APIs which will supposedly ally all the disparate 3D boards under one big Windows 95 roof – *but only if they're compatible.* There are some companies which are whole-heartedly behind the concept, while others are still if-ing and but-ing about it. Diamond, for instance, has said it loves the concept of Direct3D.

Watch it

Our advice to you at this stage is: don't be rash. Hold onto your wallets for the time being. The format war will no doubt be followed by a price war, and until Direct3D has been released, tried, tested, and working, avoid making a commitment to any standard until we tell you to. All right? Got it? Good (of course, if you're a rich bast go and spend your Dad's money on every single card which comes out – see if we care). There will be probably one game released (maybe *Quake*, or whatever it's going to be called, maybe not) which will excel so awesomely under one card that everyone will rush out and buy it big time. Let's wait and see, shall we? Z

How to pronounce 'Gouraud'

As experts in poncey words like 'pugnacious' and 'pneumoccal' and 'ascariasis', we are often asked: "Oi, Ponce face, how do you say 'Gouraud', as in the shading?" Well, we reply, there are various schools of thought on the pronunciation of this tricky, nay 'recalcitrant' little word. The accepted range is:

- Goo-rad (in an East London accent ie "I had that Professor Goorad in the back of my cab)
- Goo-rah (with a vague East European lilt on the last syllable ie "Oh gosh, not okra with goorah sauce again Mother")
- Goo-row (with a poncey posho feel ie "Yah, the Internet is so cyber-chic, so... goorow")
- Goo-rrrrrrah (with a French-like trill on the 'r's ie "Oh cherie, do that goorrrrrah thing to me *encore une fois*")

Poncey words to use at parties

Like every other hyped new technology, 3D graphics accelerators are bound to attract all manner of half-arsed, badly informed waffle. You know the sort of stuff: "Yeah, but mine's got 128-bit Z-buffered GUI DAC-based polygon acceleration as well, giving a Gouraud rating of 17.34."

Luckily, we are here for you – a shining beacon of truth in a deceitful, hostile world, and so we've thoughtfully provided this handy glossary to help you sort the wheat from the chaff.

Polygon
Fundamental to 3D graphics, a polygon is a shape with a fixed number of sides, usually three or four. Most 3D objects are created by adding lots of them together. You'll find that many manufacturers quote a 'polygons per second' figure for their 3D accelerators. This is important but deceptive – what's important is how many texture-mapped polys the card can manage per second.

Texture-mapping
Taking a 2D bitmap and projecting it onto a 3D shape made up of polygons (the walls and floors in *Doom* are a typical example). While this makes things look much more realistic, it's a bit of a bastard as far as speed is concerned. Most of these new-fangled cards accelerate texture-mapping (ie hooray!).

Gouraud shading
Most 3D objects are made up of a number of flat polygons. To make a curvy or organic shape you need to render loads of polygons to give the impression of smooth curves, which in turn takes a lot of power. Gouraud shading gets round this by interpolating (smoothly grading) between two separate, differently-coloured areas, giving the illusion of a continuous, curved shape.

Phong shading
Like Gouraud shading only better and, consequently, slower.

Hidden line/surface removal
Working out which parts of an object are out of sight is important to reduce processor overheads. Some cards accelerate this too.

Z-buffering
A popular technique for hidden line removal. Basically, extra memory is used to store depth information for each pixel. The further away an object is, the lower its value in the Z-buffer. The 3D Blaster has a hardware Z-buffer while the Diamond Edge doesn't, so it's by no means a universal feature. The argument is that the cost of extra memory would be better employed elsewhere. We'll see.

API (Application Programming Interface)
A set of programming 'tools' used by developers which help standardise things like graphics cards and accelerator boards. The most important of these will certainly be Microsoft's own Direct3D API, designed for Windows 95, which is due out early next year.

Anti-aliasing
The process of 'blurring' the edges of 3D shapes to make them look less jagged. Takes several passes to be effective, takes a lot of calculation, and looks plop on anything less than SVGA.

Red Box 3D Bird of Prey

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

THE ULTIMATE GAMES PC' IS ONE OF those phrases that you often see bandied about on front covers and adverts, used mainly to sell magazines to people who know that they can't afford a Pentium Pro super machine with lots of everything, but want to read about one anyway just so that they can get horribly depressed about the 486DX2 that they thought *was* the Ultimate Games PC when they bought it a year ago.

Up until now, any machine deserving this accolade has basically consisted of a decent sound card, CD-ROM drive, joysticks and other stuff, all combined with the fastest CPU around. And while things like a competent motherboard design and graphics card can all play their part in speeding games up, it's the CPU that does the majority of the work, which is why fast ones are best (well, at least they used to be). However, as they have taken quite a bit of work away from the CPU, these new-fangled 3D accelerator cards have messed things around a bit to the extent that it's not always worth blowing all of your budget on a P133, for instance.

The Red Box 3D Bird of Prey is the first PC we've seen that comes with a 3D accelerator card (as well as being landed with the longest name). Basically, it's a P100 multimedia machine with the 2MB VRAM version of the Diamond Edge accelerator card (reviewed in this issue), a pair of Sega Saturn gamepads, and a copy of *Virtua Fighter Remix* and *NASCAR Racing*. Apart from accelerating the third dimension, the Diamond Edge also acts as a graphics card and wavetable sound card, so the internal layout of the machine is pretty tidy. The Diamond Edge isn't SoundBlaster compatible, so Red Box has provided an SB16 clone for games; this isn't needed by the bundled games, as they output digital effects through the wavetable port, as will lots of future games, but it's obviously a good move to include support for the huge library of SoundBlaster titles. The gamepads plug into the PC via an adaptor card, and while not as good as some, it's certainly a refreshing and pleasant change to get two of anything working on a PC.

Moving in for the kill

The PC itself is a pretty impressive bit of kit, boasting a throbbing 16MB of RAM and a bulging 1GB hard disk, both of which give you all the room you need to get your fave games running; 16MB of RAM is becoming more important these days anyway, and it helps speed up an increasing number of games, as well as making Windows 95 more responsive. The Bird of Prey also has an SRAM burst-pipeline secondary cache, and though quoting this to friends will result in a bout of horrid name-calling, it's dead quick, and the *Doom* frame rate test gave a reading of 37.8, which is pretty good.

The machine comes complete with Windows 95 and, unlike quite a few configured, and it wasn't long before the highly predictable fights over the gamepads started (which I won, 'cos I'm the biggest, but then no one's sussed that I'm a shandy drinker yet).

The clever thing about it is that when you start up *Virtua Fighter*, for example (these games all run under Windows 95, by the way), the screen flickers and wobbles for a couple of seconds, before switching into a lower resolution for the game itself. The mouse remains active the whole time, though, and a right-click brings up a menu to allow you to switch back to Windows.

Without wishing to enter the wacky, magical world of games reviewers, the frame rate and polygon count on *Virtua* is pretty decent, and is far faster than the raw Pentium would be capable of. By 'only' putting a P100 in this machine, Red Box appears to have decided that the 3D acceleration is more important than the fastest CPU. While the company will happily stick a faster processor in if that is what you want, as long as you intend to play games designed for the Diamond Edge, you should find that a P100 is perfectly adequate; over the next few months you can expect loads of these games to become available. While the Bird of Prey costs a lot more than a Saturn or PlayStation, I don't need to point out the advantages of having a shit-hot PC, and the 3D Bird of Prey gives you the best of both worlds. Z

Score

85

A well-made, speedy PC with 3D acceleration to boot.

Price: £1885 **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Red Box
Tel: 01480 405541

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Diamond Edge 3D 3240XL

(Right) Yes, we do seem a bit keen on *Virtua Fighter Remix* pix this issue – but they're bloody good, aren't they?

After all the hype about 3D graphics accelerators, we've finally managed to get our hands on one. Our eager Dave Mathieson has a look.

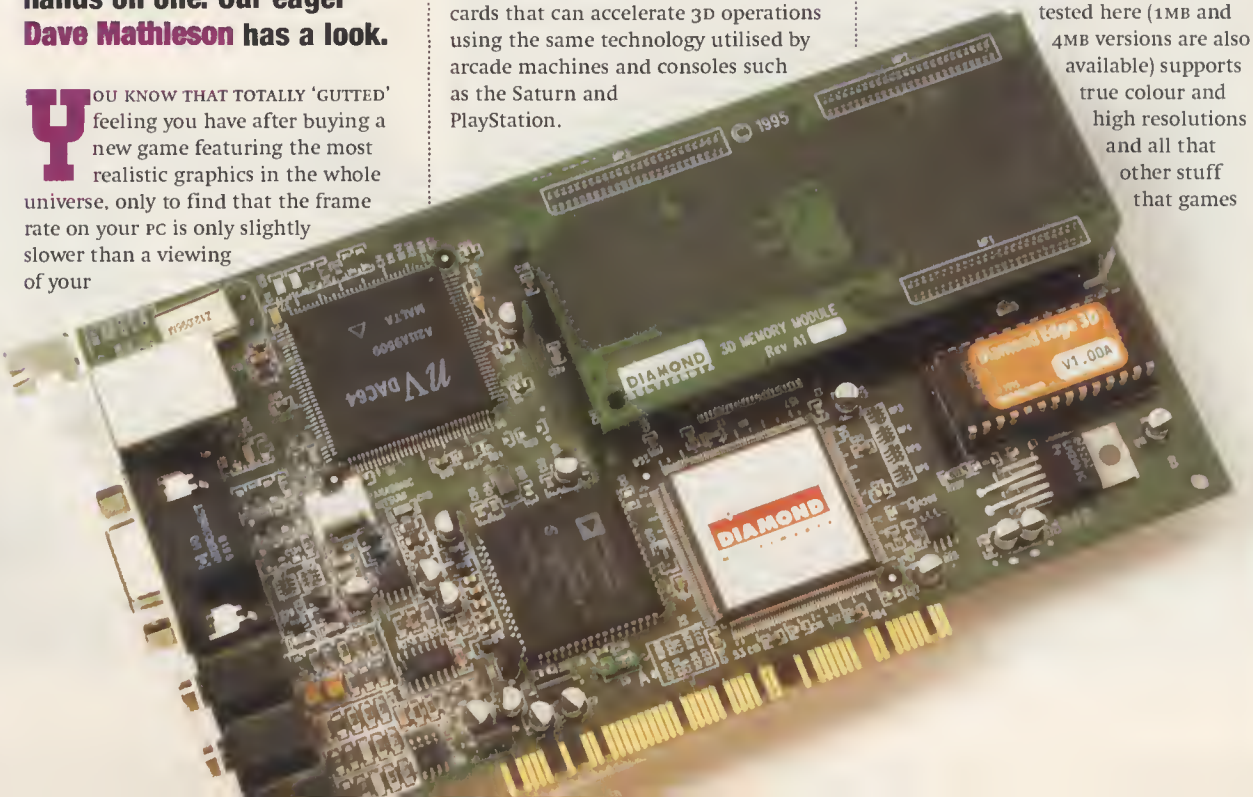
YOU KNOW THAT TOTALLY 'GUTTED' feeling you have after buying a new game featuring the most realistic graphics in the whole universe, only to find that the frame rate on your PC is only slightly slower than a viewing of your neighbour's holiday slides? Until now, this has meant a faster CPU, as this is where the action takes place. But if you've read this far you've no doubt read our feature on the new graphics cards that can accelerate 3D operations using the same technology utilised by arcade machines and consoles such as the Saturn and PlayStation.

Entering a new dimension

The Diamond Edge is the first of these cards that we've managed to get our grubby hands on, and jolly excited we were too, especially since it comes with a copy of Sega's *Virtua Fighter Remix* (which you can't possibly fail to notice is also reviewed in this issue).

As well as being a 3D accelerator, the Edge 3D acts as a standard graphics card and wavetable sound card (but it's *not* SoundBlaster compatible, which we'll come on to in a moment). I'm happy to say that installation was a breeze, especially as Windows 95 automatically detects the right settings and gets on with it – a shining example of 'Plug & Play' in action. One thing that I was worried about before installing the card was whether it would mess up the settings of my SoundBlaster AWE32, but nothing of the sort happened, which taught me a thing or two about distrusting new-fangled technology.

As a Windows graphics card, the Edge seems fine, and the 2MB VRAM version tested here (1MB and 4MB versions are also available) supports true colour and high resolutions and all that other stuff that games



(Right) Well, at least the shots of Kage and Jeffry are a bit more interesting than a piece of hardware (to say nothing of Pai showing no mercy on the far right...) but for graphics like these you'll need a card like the Edge 3D.

players aren't arsed about. Under DOS, though, it seemed a bit slow, and there was noticeable jerkiness when typing <DIR>, for example, at the DOS prompt; now I'd expect a crap frame rate when running *EF2000*, but DIR?!

Bundle-tastic

Fortunately, it looks like I got myself into a big tizz over nothing – the DIR jerkiness was obviously no more than a text thing, and the graphics appeared fine – or did they? Now I hate to be a smoothness-spotter, but *Actua Soccer* seemed a tad jerkier than usual, and I found that the *Doom 2* frame rate test bore this out. When I tried *Actua Soccer* in hi-res mode, though, it seemed better than before. Weird. I can only assume that the card has been optimised for SVGA resolutions, which seems to make sense as the games designed for the Edge 3D run in 640x480.

Apart from *Virtua Fighter Remix*, the Edge 3D comes bundled with *NASCAR Racing* and, by the time you read this, *Descent*. These all run from within Windows 95, with all the not-having-to-mess-about-with-memory advantages that this entails. What's more, the card has an adaptor that enables you to use Sega Saturn gamepads, although these aren't included in the asking price. When I tried running *Virtua* on a P90, a warning came up on the screen stating that it wouldn't be able to manage 30 frames per second unless I turned down some detail settings – an appropriate reaction at this point might be 'what's the bloody point then?'. Fortunately, even at slower rates, the game still runs very smoothly, and the graphics are far better than anything that the PC could manage to produce by itself. As well as that, the Edge's wavetable module does a good job with the sound effects, which are completely independent of any existing sound hardware you already have fitted.

But of course the question you really want the answer to is... is the Edge 3D card a worthwhile way of spending your hard-earned cash? Well, if you're happy with your existing games but would like them to run a bit faster, you should buy a faster CPU. Or, if you own a 486 and want better games, buy a new PC (or motherboard at least), because even if you were to go out and buy an Edge 3D card, you still wouldn't be able to exploit its full potential.

The important thing to bear in mind here is that the Edge hasn't really been designed to bring better frame rates to slow machines, but what it does do is enable far better graphics on machines that are pretty fast anyway. This means that, at the moment, it's more likely to appeal to 'the gamer who already has everything' type of person (or, failing that, rich twats). As more games are released, though, it'll become pretty hard to resist the allure of top quality graphics, and, combined with lower prices, the Edge (and all the other 3D accelerators currently looming on the horizon) should become an essential piece of gaming kit. Z

Score

82

Okay, it's a bit pricey, but hey – you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.

Price: £410 inc. VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Diamond Multimedia Systems Ltd
Tel: 01753 501400

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Captain Kirk's K

You can turn your PC into a *Star Trek* shrine with the following collection of *Next Generation* accessories designed to turn your humble PC into the bridge of the Enterprise (honest). The whole set may be a 'must have' for Trekkies, but unfortunately it's definitely a 'must have nothing to do with' for your average punter with better things to spend £137.96 on. Dave Mathieson ventures into the unimaginable.

Keyboard £79.99

The centre piece for the whole *Next Generation* collection is this keyboard fashioned from expensive plastic, in red and blue, with rubberised side panels. But don't be fooled into thinking this is a simple, cheap, tacky replacement input device, because as well as all the functionality of a conventional keyboard you also get a fabulous light show that puts the great Jean Michel Jarre to shame.

In the top right-hand corner of the keyboard, along with the usual Num Lock, Caps Lock and Scroll Lock indicators, you also get a number of extra lights that, upon your command as bridge controller, burst into action, flashing complicated, synchronised patterns with glamorous names such as Wave, Meltdown and Crash.

The spacebar is amusingly stamped with the "Space: The Final Frontier" logo (get it?) and the keyboard even incorporates a comfy wrist rest, complete with Federation badge, to ease stress on your poor wrists caused by trying to control the wild light show.

The keyboard comes with a PS2 plug converter to ensure that it will work with just about any PC, as well as a games CD-ROM with over 250 titles, most of dubious quality with dodgy titles like *Bible Challenge*, *Grot 31* and *Chopper Challenge* (oo-er).

Mouse £29.99

Touted as a "sophisticated phaser", even though it looks absolutely nothing like one, this mouse wouldn't stun even your grandma (or draw any reaction at all, for that matter). Awkwardly shaped with awful buttons, the best thing about it is the free mouse mat that comes with it in the shape of the *Next Generation* insignia.

Multimedia disk/CD holder £10.99

Quite what is multimedia about a plastic box capable of storing 35 floppy disks or ten CDs and shaped vaguely like a starship shuttle isn't made very clear, but it is a box and it is plastic, and if you look half as happy owning it as the Wesley Crusher look-alike pictured on the packaging, you won't have wasted your money.

Monitor mask and mouse mat £16.99

You didn't know they used a 486sx/25 to run Starfleet ships, did you? Well, you'll think they do if you get your mitts on this fantastic monitor mask. The idea is that you stick the mask to the outside of your monitor with small pieces of sticky sponge (just like the ones they use on the real Enterprise), and try to convince yourself that you're not really sitting alone in your Kleenex-strewn bedroom but are instead reclining in one of those comfy swinging armchairs on the bridge, in charge of warp speeds, photon torpedoes and deflector shields. Promises to fit any 14-inch or 15-inch monitor and comes supplied with a bonus mouse mat.

Score

20

For non Trekkies.

Score

80

For any Super Trekkie with Next Gen underpants, a Klingon dictionary and a tattoo of Data on their bum.

Available from Toys 'R' Us, Dixons, Game and most computer retailers

GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

PC ZONE READERS OFFER

ORDER LINE 01789 490 215

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Save over 20% on the recommended retail price

By simply plugging this handy gadget into your joystick port, you can now allow 2 players at the same time on PC games without the hassle of having to fiddle about behind your computer.

Gone are the days of having to open up the machine for card installation to achieve the two player option. The Alfa Twin Joystick Adaptor comes with six feet of cable and plugs directly into the Joystick port eliminating the dangers of hardware conflict.

PC Zone are able to offer readers this great product at a special low price of £19.99 Usual price £25.99

To order with a credit card, call 01789 490 215 and quote ref BK06A. Cost includes VAT and postage and packing. If you wish to pay by cheque or postal order, complete the coupon below in BLOCK CAPITALS and send with your remittance to: **Dennis Direct, PO Box 2505, Alcester B50 4JU.**

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This information may be added to a mailing list. Please tick here if you would prefer not to receive details of special offers. ☐

CODE: 20-96-01

Once again we've bribed the Boggit to help out frustrated *PC Zone* readers who can't find the key to open the door to obtain the potion to... well, you get our drift. So whatever your problem you can choose between the caring advice of our TruePlayer Tips geezer on Wednesdays afternoons or, for the more daring among you, the abuse of the Boggit. *PC Zone*, the games magazine that truly cares...

TROUBLESHOOTER

TruePlayer™ Tips

Telephone

0171 917 7698

Ask for TruePlayer™ Tips from 2.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays only.

Just ring this number and ask our friendly Tips bloke for all the latest tips, cheats, hacks, cracks, solutions and spoils for all the latest games. This is not an answering machine. This is not a premium line number. A real person on the other end of the line will be happy to oblige you.

The Bottom Line

If you get into trouble or are a bit scared, ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1995. If you try to pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for alleged hardware or software damage caused by direct or indirect use of the HackMasters™ hacks and cracks. If the chances of damage were higher than 0.0000001 per cent, then we wouldn't be printing them. Make sure you follow the instructions and nothing can happen.

READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal, we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... *"Happy New Year!"*.

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

The Boggit's Mailbag

Dreamweb

In your Buyers' Guide you say there's an infamous shagging scene in *Dreamweb* – how on earth do I get to it, because I've been trying for months to kill the first bad guy, but it's bloody hard.

Hassein Noteualll, Wanstead

You didn't explain exactly who you are trying to kill, so I'll assume it's the guard in the hotel. I trust you have a gun – if not you can buy one from the bartender in the pool hall. Outside the lift in the hotel use the axe as soon as the watch icon changes to a hand. The guard will shoot at you, but he'll miss. Grab the gun from your inventory and plug him.

Frankly, I don't wish to know about any rude bits, and I don't believe it anyway.

(PS If I've spelt your name incorrectly it's because I couldn't read your handwriting.)

Sounds familiar?

I have discovered a couple of interesting points in *Doom 2* and *Heretic*. Using the WAD level editor (HEU or DEU2 will do) you can extract the DSBOSSIT directory entry from *Doom 2* – the sound the Map 30 boss makes when you enter. Also the SORACT entry from *Heretic* – the sound D'Sparil makes when he spots you. Now using a sound sample editor capable of loading .RAW files (eg Creative Wave Studio) you can reverse and play both sound effects to hear messages from the programmers.

The DSBOSSIT sound becomes 'To win the game you must kill me'. The SORACT sound becomes 'Surrender to D'Sparil'.

Daryl Hathaway, Stoke-on-Trent

Uh-oh! I fear we've found one of those fabled anoraks who sits in on a Saturday night playing his floppy disks backwards listening for a message from Satan. I'm sure you're telling the truth, but I'm not so sure I want to appear interested.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR

Day Of The Tentacle

Help! I'm stuck in Laverne's level in the future. How do I go about getting the Mummy to win the 'Best Smile' prize in the Beauty Contest?

Daniel O'Shea, High Wycombe

I don't know what objects you've already got, so it's a bit difficult, but here we go:

Use the toy mouse on the cat and then go upstairs to the top floor. Use the box of laughs, the dentures and the soggy noodles on the Mummy. Use the fork with the Mummy's head and then use the fake barf with Harold. Talk to the judges and the Mummy will win the competition.

X-Wing

I am writing to you in the guise of one who has flown high in the quest of TruePlayer-ness, but who like Icarus, has now fallen from the burning sky, cast amidst the dying embers of summer that fall like amber raindrops from the cloud-swept heavens. *(Is this plonker for real or what? – Boggit.)*

Indeed I have played *X-Wing*, but where time and tide wait for no man, and I have only so much time to play, I humbly ask if you have in your treasure chest some cheat codes for the Tours of Duty that will allow this fledgling Flight Cadet a chance to embark through a course of the game before he expires?

Jeff Fieldsend, Wigan

Does someone in authority know that you are out? I don't know of any particular cheat that could help you (in fact I'm not sure that anyone could help you), but I can give you a

piece of cryptic advice. If you use the editor on one of your savegame (eg EDIT SAVEX.PTL)

go sector 1

change offset 240 - 242 to 0F

You'll find that you can now select any mission and change tours.

Simon The Sorcerer

The dragon in this game is giving me a hard time. I'm sure I can get my hands on some of those gold coins.

Chris Worthy, Powys

I'm sure you could lose some as well – your hands that is! Don't bother trying to nick the gold while that large scaly git is so close by, instead you should start by using the cold remedy on him which you can pinch from the Druid's house. Having shown him what a polite and kindly lad you are you can then pinch his fire extinguisher and leggit outside. The trick at this point is to get onto the top of the cave by using the hook which you should have picked up inside the mine.

Once you get aloft you can combine the magnet from the wizard's cottage with the rope from the blacksmiths to make a handy 'grope on a rope'. Lowering the magnet down into the cave will pick up some gold coins. Yes, I know gold isn't magnetic, but I didn't write the bloody game, so don't blame me. One sneaky trick is to lower the rope a second time to get even more money. You know what they say: 'You can never be too thin or too rich' – unless of course you work for PC Zone.

Little Big Adventure

I'm stuck at the start of this and can't get into the cloning centre, fortress or teleportation centre as all of the doors are locked. Have you got any ideas?

Nick Horn, Wimborne

A boring question which requires a long boring answer, so I'm not going to do it. Instead, for everyone else who can at least get started, here are a few non-boring tips.

You can open lots of stuff with Gawley's Horn. Also, the flute can be used as a substitute to open things up. Try blowing it in various places.

There are three other clover boxes in addition to the two you start with:

- *One is in the sewers on Citadel Island, in the scene just south of the Citadel*
- *One is in the basement of the tavern on Citadel Island. You can't get in until later in the game after FunFrock's minions close it. If you re-open it you'll get a key to the basement*
- *One is on the little island south of Peg Leg Street on Principal Island. The bridge is out so you need to fly over.*

Remember that you can use your clovers to replenish yourself. If FunFrock gets a couple of hits on you, bring up your inventory and select the clover bin; it'll rejuvenate you.

Yes, once again we're on hand to give our lesser brethren the magic word to make them the terror of the dungeon and the master of Level 9. If you can stand the shame of using the following cheats, we suppose we can stand the disgrace of peddling them. Read on, wimps!

Hexen

This dark and deeply gloomy *Doom* clone contains just as many exotic cheat codes as its illustrious predecessor:

BGOKEY	God mode
CRHINEHART	All weapons + full mana
MRAYMONDJUDY	All keys
BRAFFEL	25 of each item (this will not give you any of the 'one of a kind' items)
REVEAL	Reveals the map
SGURNO	100% health
JSUMWALT	Co-ordinate display
EBIESSMAN	Pig mode
RRETTENMUND	Ticker to count your frame rate (like *Doom's* devparm mode)
KSHILDER	Sound debug; shows info
BPELLETIER##	Warp
RJOHNSON	Go through walls

Heretic

Warning! Warning!

Don't try these* Heretic *game cheat codes:

RAMBO	Takes all your weapons away
QUICKEN	Instant death!
F5	Suicide

Typing all the numbers above <4> activate certain artefacts (but this is only providing you already have them in your inventory):

5	Icon of the defender
6	Quartz flask
7	Dark servant
8	Flechette
9	Banishment device
0	Chaos device
\	Disk of repulsion
Backspace	Porkulator

Tyriacht

Here's how to make this enjoyable vertical scrolling shoot 'em up from Epic that much easier...

Type <TECHNO> at the opening screen for the demo; this enables you to use the following cheat codes and obtain a different ship with all new weapons:

Techno	The Experimental PQZ
Stormwind	Stormwind the Elemental
Unknown	TX SilverCloud
Enemy	Captured U-Fighter
Weird	FoodShip Nine
Stealth	Ninja Star

Witchaven

To activate the *Witchaven* cheat codes, first press the backspace key, then type one of the following commands:

SCOOTER	Gives all the weapons, spells and a full load of pikes
WANGO	Gives full health, and armour, all keys and makes you level 7
MOMMY	Gives nine of every potion and spell

But watch out for these three suicide commands that cause instant death: IDKFA, RAMBO, and RSVP.

Jagged Alliance

In the beginning when money is a bit tight, choose two mercenaries with good marksmen abilities (eg Ivan Leech or Ice Man). If you can't quite afford an expensive doctor buy two cheap ones – it doesn't matter about their abilities other than Medical and Cost as you can keep them at HQ and fix the others on a rota basis. Try to get an inexpensive mercenary who nevertheless has high medical and mechanical abilities, then use him to help heal the wounded and repair damaged items.

Be careful when hiring or firing team members as once a mercenary has been fired they can't be re-hired later. Make sure you have enough cash to pay all mercenaries at the end of a mission – if you don't have enough you'll have to fire them and they'll take all of the weapons/items they are holding.

Submitted by Richard Hakin

Last month we revealed how to help the GDI forces bring peace and stability to the world. And as the staff at *PC Zone* have a tendency towards being 'bad-assed muthas', we felt a bit ashamed about such goody-goody tactics, so for our second and final *C&C* instalment, we've decided it's time to help the guy with the bald head to get his own back.

'And lo, after the killing of his brother Abel, Cain left and went into the land of Nod – and there verily he kicked some butts!'

Command & Conquer

The Nod Missions

Basic strategies

There are a few basic strategies which you must be aware of:

- Clicking twice on a barracks/factory makes it the primary producer (ie that's where your next product will appear if you have more than one factory).
- Sell everything you own just before you finish a mission, as a percentage of your cash is carried over to the next game. For example, you could leave loads of harvesters running on automatic for hours before you destroy the final building in the enemy's camp – in *Command & Conquer* you *can* take it with you when you go.
- If you build something which is expensive but then abort it before placing it, the price of the building gets changed into money in your pocket rather than tiberium, and therefore doesn't need a silo to hold it in future.
- If you drop a sandbag, or park a vehicle on a spot where the enemy used to build, he can't build there again.
- Use an engineer to take over a helipad and you can then either build orcas, or attack helicopters, even if you immediately sell the enemy building.

THE BASIC STRATEGY FOR MOST OF the levels in *Command & Conquer* is to get an engineer into any outlying GDI building and then immediately place a sandbag next to it. It's worth doing this, because you'll find that even if the building is destroyed, your sandbag will be left untouched and you can build onwards from there. More sandbags can be constructed to surround enemy buildings or you can repeatedly build gun turrets in the heart of the enemy camp. Remember: gun turrets and advanced guard towers will destroy enemy structures, but only if you tell them to.

Have you got what it takes to go nuclear?

No doubt you suffered from the Nods' nuclear blast when you played the part of the GDI Commander, and now you're looking forward to getting your finger on the button yourself. Ah, if only life was that easy. Building a temple in the final mission doesn't give you nuclear capability unless you previously found the three required components hidden within crates on Levels 6, 8 and 12. You will obviously find the correct crate on Level 6 as that is the purpose of the mission. On Level 8 the crate is sitting in a fenced area next to the two GDI

(Left) It looks like the GDI boys are pretty keen on the bridge.

(Below) As ever, the sandbagging technique we outlined last month is relevant here as well.

helipads. On Level 12 you must search for the crate beneath the GDI construction base.

The Nod Missions

There are 13 levels in any one game, but you could choose a different set of missions to the ones selected here. Hopefully this list includes the most popular battlegrounds, and addresses the most common trouble spots.

Level 1

This is just too easy to explain. If you can't win this one, pack up your kit and go home.

Level 2 – Egypt

Sneak in troops and destroy everything

You have enough cash to create a massive army. Create engineers to seize the GDI refinery and construction at an early point and you're unbeatable.

Level 3 – Sudan

Release the prisoners

Don't waste time exploring – your one task is to get an engineer into the prison building on the top-left corner of the map. Take a bazooka soldier with you to open the camp's north-east boundary wall, then strike across for the prison. This manoeuvre will take you 15 minutes tops!

Level 4 – Chad

Eliminate GDI

Quickly reach the friendly villagers at the bottom-right of the map and stop the killing. Once the village is secured destroy all GDI forces and unfriendly villagers. Move across the map using assault bikes to run forward and lure GDI troops into a prepared arc of your troops.

Level 5 – Mauritania

Set up SAM sites and destroy GDI base

Move up the left-hand side of the map and enter the camp at the back wall, completely ignoring the front entrance. With a couple of engineers you can seize the refinery and construction site.

Level 6 – Ivory Coast

Steal crate containing nuclear device

Take the right-hand group to the back wall of the GDI base as your left-hand group makes for the front entrance. While the front door team attacks, use the other group's assault cycle to break a hole in the top-left wall. Retreat your assault cycle and hide it in the top-right of the map. The enemy troops will pour out of the top of the camp and head left. Once the way is clear, run the assault cycle in through the back door and grab the crate in the bottom-right. Leave using the nearby exit and find the flare in the bottom-right corner.

Level 7 – Central African Republic

Steal an orca

You must get at least one engineer through to take over a helipad and use it to pound the village in the top-right corner of the map. You can ignore your group which is designed to threaten the side gate; concentrate on the group containing the engineers. There are three gullies down which your troops can go. Send the tank and bazookas down the dead end gully on the left to destroy the tank and then threaten the camp. Meanwhile hide your remaining troops in the top of the right-hand gully. The GDI troops will charge up the centre one and then down the left. Once they've gone past, your hidden troops can burst out and rush down the centre gully. Sacrifice everyone to get one engineer to the helipad.

Level 8 – Zaire

Locate abandoned GDI camp, restore it and use the weapons to wipe out all opposition

Sell the construction site and use the money to buy some engineers. Place the engineers on the Chinook and capture the enemy refinery – wait until there is a harvester unloading inside. Create lots »

of bazooka troops to take out enemy orcas. An APC loaded with engineers and bazooka troops can be rushed past the GDI main gate and around to the wall at the bottom-right corner of the camp where they can break in. Destroy the power station to silence the advanced guard tower, and you're home and dry.

Level 9 – Egypt

Reinforce your base and destroy all GDI forces

Build a sandbag perimeter and reinforce it with SAM sites. The trick here is to use assault bikes which can speed past the GDI camp entrance and get around to the back wall, where they can then break in and destroy the power stations and refinery.

Level 10 – Angola

Locate the laboratory and kill the doctor using a sniper

Go north from the start point. You have few troops, so conserve them. Use a fast vehicle to run forward and then lure GDI forces back into a prepared ambush. Use the commando to pick off grenadiers from a distance. In the final moments a Nod Chinook will appear; load up the commando and then use it to hop over the final defence troops to land behind the doctor.

(Right) You need to defend your base more if you're going to survive.

(Bottom left) When you get to the village where everyone is fighting you have to knock out both the GDI troops and the bad guy villagers.

Level 11 – Namibia

Recover stealth tank technology

You are given two detachments, each on a different side of a river. The single purpose of the southern detachment is to make its way to the bottom left-hand corner and destroy the church to find the crate of money. The long range guns can also be useful for guarding your camp's front gate later on.

The northern detachment must instantly fight its way out of the top-left

(Left) The perfect example of a good sandbagging experience. See Level 13 – South Africa for more detail.

corner and head for the southern entrance of the abandoned camp midway down the left-hand side of the map. Sacrifice everything to get your engineers plus commando inside to take over the buildings – but leave the high tech lab alone, as it requires you to sneak past all enemy vehicles and avoid being shot from the river, so time your move to miss the boat.

Your initial tasks are to build SAM sites to protect the camp from airstrikes, defend the camp entrance from attacking GDI forces, and destroy the ship which strikes from the river.

- The ship can be dealt with by positioning two gun turrets on the river bank – use sandbags to get out there.
- The gun turrets backed up later with an obelisk tower (position it well back from the river or the ship will attack it) will guard the gate.
- Airstrikes will cause you grief, but if you haven't wasted an engineer taking over the high tech lab in the early phases of the game they won't attack it. Your final act of the game will be to take over this building.

Level 12 – Botswana

Capture the technology centre and recover the codes

Attack the two mammoth tanks with an assault bike and lead them away from the bridge to get your main force over and set up camp along the left edge of the map. When the tanks return, again use a bike to lure them back over the bridge. If you sacrifice the bike out of sight of the bridge the tanks will remain where they are and will not return. Basically, if you leave the enemy alone while you build up your base, they'll tend to ignore you. The level is won when you use an engineer to secure the building in the top-right corner of the enemy camp.

Level 13 – South Africa

Build a temple and destroy all GDI forces

Begin here by using your engineer to commandeer the GDI Chinook; this can then be used to rescue the commando from the nearby island. Destroy the island church for a chest of money. Set up a small island camp, but don't spend too much because you'll be transferring to the mainland as soon as a second construction site turns up. Use the Chinook to ferry a few men across to the mainland to wait.

There are two main GDI sites: at the bottom-left and top-right of the map. A trick is to block one end of the bridge which leads south from the northern camp by using an invisible stealth tank. As the northern troops won't be able to see the tank, they can't attack it – but the computer will not allow the troops to walk through an occupied space, so they are well and truly stuffed. With the northern army held in their camp you are now free to sandbag your way south from your own camp into the GDI base, right to the back wall, and deploy gun turrets to wipe out the surrounding opposition. You can also block the entrance to their own refinery and starve them of cash. Use the Chinook to fly in an engineer to grab a helipad. You now have the technology to build your own. Build up this southern base as your main camp while leaving the GDI airstrikes to waste their time on your original ones. Go east and take over the GDI weapons factory, which will provide you with all of the enemy's technology.

Finally, attack the east side of the north camp and sacrifice everything to get an engineer inside any structure – you are now free to sandbag and gun turret your way to victory. Make sure you have a sandbag ready to drop next to your first captured building and they'll never get you out. No nuclear weapon is required to win: simply destroy all structures and most of the village huts to achieve victory.

And finally...

Did you know that one of the three main management functions within Windows 95 is the Graphical Device Interface – referred to throughout all the technical manuals as the GDI?

There are myths surrounding all the best games – even *C&C* has its own *X-Files* entry. Have you seen the space-ship which is supposed to mysteriously appear above the battlefield when you least expect it? Is it true, are 'they' out there, or is it a figment of a late-night imagination? While we haven't actually seen it ourselves, we are told by those who know that it only appears during multi-player mode. If you've seen it, write and let us know. Z

VIRTUAL KARTS™

FEEL THE RUSH

Virtual Karts leaves other racing games stuck in first gear. The finest 3-D SVGA graphics, Network Play, Fast-Paced Action, Simple Plug & Play Operation, US Circuits, Virtual Cockpit, Engine Set-Up options, Weather Variations and a host of other features ensures that, once again, MicroProse leaves its competitors choking on exhaust fumes.

MICROPROSE

CD-ROM CD-ROM

Spectrum HoloByte - MicroProse World Wide Web Site: http://www.microprose.com

If a multi-zillion pound corporate telecommunications company (say, British Telecom) starts to invest in a multi-player modem games server (called Wireplay), then that occurrence can surely only be summed up in one word, non? *PC Zone* pays a visit to BT's headquarters to see if the term 'superninja-coolola-mactastic-o-rama' will suffice.

why play wireplay?

"It's good to talk," says Bob Hoskins. And indeed it is, Bob, but there comes a time when the talking stops and the fragging begins. As regular readers of our extravagant and ground-breaking super-column™, DoomWatch, will testify, multi-playing modem entertainment is the future of games. It may be incredibly boring and mindless on the outside, but inside it's a hot freakin' 'boite ninjaristique' *(What? – Ed.)*. Single-player titles will always be around, but dual, tri, quad and even octa-player games are what software companies are now falling over themselves to develop.

Look at *Doom*. No, gawp, drooling slowly at *Doom* (as we all did two years ago). It started the network gaming movement and like JFK's death yonks ago, everybody remembers where they were and who they were with when they played their first network *Doom-a-thon*. The yawns of single-player gave way to the shrieks and schloppy glopping sounds as miles and miles of virtual intestines were smeared across LANs all over the country. Then everybody noticed the magic word 'modem' sandwiched between the 'network' and 'serial' on their set-up screens; no longer did you have to rely on your sleep-encrusted office pals (who would annoyingly drop out of the *Doom Circle* the moment they got girlfriends). No longer was it a quick hour at lunch-time, or a not-so-quick twelve hours after six. Now you could dial up anyone in the country, any time, and play any level – from anywhere.

That started the snowball rolling and it fast became a tightly packed ice boulder strewn with the wellies of those who thought they could resist and just have 'the odd game from time to time'. Organised leagues popped up on BBSs, on CIX, and on CompuServe. Usenet groups were vomiting tidal waves of boasting and banter

("I'm the best!"... "No, you're not!"... "Yes I am!"... "I'll kick your tiny little ass!"... "No you won't!"... "Yes I bloody will!" etc etc). Dedicated *Doom* servers soon appeared around the country, places you could expand your two-player modem horizons into full-on four-player experiences. Every new game released started to feature network play or link-up mode. And, recently, to cap it all, iD Software and Microsoft hosted the World Deathmatch Championship in Seattle (as covered in the last issue of *PC Zone*). And now? British Telecom is touting its multi-player games system, Wireplay.

DO WHAT?

Wireplay is the collective brainchild of Richard Warren and Colin Duffy, two mild-mannered BT employees, working in the 'new technologies' wing of BT's HQ in Holborn, London. Once a mere vestigial polyp, BT's multimedia wing has recently sprouted to encompass »

(Right) Flail about miserably and get hopelessly disorientated in *Descent*, Interplay's 360 degree 'em up on Wireplay.

(Above) Duffy: "A lot of people ask us about the logo. Why? Dunno. We just like it."

such high-vaulted concepts as Video On Demand (which is currently being tested in er, Ipswich), video conferencing, and multi-player modem gaming.

"*Doom* started it off for us. It gave us the idea," explains Duffy, saying exactly what we want to hear.

"It was such an amazing feeling to play network *Doom*."

As the dynamic duo slugged it out with red-hot chainguns, it hit them like a flash: why not meld modem play with BT's not-inconsiderable resources and create an on-line gaming service called er, er, Wireplay? The rest may well be history.

"It's a games server based in York," explains Richard Warren. "You dial in with your modem using special software." Once logged on, you meet people on-line, chat, enter a 'locker room'... and then kill each other.

"But it's not all death-kill games. We've had a huge amount of support from the English Bridge Union, and they're going to start their own league."

Bridge, huh? We'll let that one pass.

"But bridge is the third most popular recreational activity in the United Kingdom."

Yes, thank you.

"After angling and ballroom dancing."

Sure.

"The EBU has thousands of members all around the country."

Uh-huh, 'members' being the key word. Look, we want to know about death and killing and *Doom* and blood and that.

"Okay, well currently we have *Descent* and *Virtual Pool* implemented, and we hope to have six more titles on-line soon. Also, people will be able to play any modem game out there – *Doom, Hexen* etc – but only two-player at the moment. We're working with games developers to make their forthcoming and existing games Wireplay-compatible."

Currently, BT sports an impressive list of supporters including Electronic Arts, Gremlin Interactive, MicroProse, Mindscape, SCI, and Interplay. Top Bullfrog supremo Peter Molyneux is quoted as saying: "I can see Wireplay becoming the reason to buy a modem." Great praise indeed.

"We hope to have four million users within five years," Duffy states nonchalantly. Choke. Hello? Hello? Earth calling British Telecom. Four *million* users? "That's how many people will have a PC and a modem by the turn of the century."

Oh.

(Below) Remember, it was *Doom* that was responsible for making us a nation of crazed networking gamers...

How do you play using Wireplay?

Registration

Each player is endowed with a nickname and password when they log on. Each household can have multiple accounts with multiple names, for example Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, and Gran. You can also opt to fill in a 'CV' of your interests and quirky personal traits, so potential challengers can access your ability to maintain 'banter' (and at the same time check to see if your hobbies include angling, ballroom dancing, and bridge).

The noticeboard

This is the nexus – or 'hub' if you like – of Wireplay where proposers 'pin' their requested games, skill level and number of players for all to see and assess. If there are zillions of people on-line, the list can be filtered by game, proposer (if you want to locate one person in particular), time (if you want to play later), or level (if you want a challenge or a walkover). From the noticeboard you can also spin off into the news area, which has Web-style graphical stories and adverts – or to the Clubs and Competitions screen (obvious).

The locker room

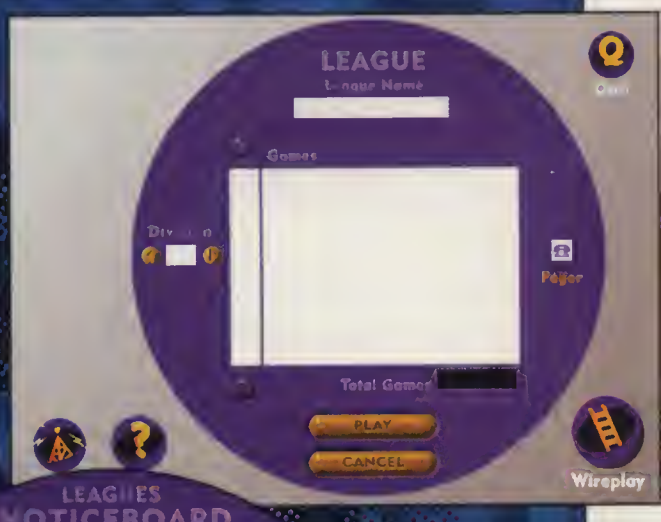
Once you've found some likely-looking fragbait, you can join your opponent(s) in the locker room. Here you can exchange insults, discuss parameters and exclude obnoxious or unskilled players. Once everything's decided, the proposer starts the game and off you blunder into the fibre optic fog *(What? – Ed.)*.

Clubs

An especially cool feature of Wireplay is the ability to easily create clubs. Anyone can start one, give it a name, and bar entry to everyone except those who have been given the unique password. So, you and 30 of your *Doom* chums could create a club called, say, 'Disciples Of The UberFragMeister', set up opening hours, congregate for deathmatches, and create an interesting and illegal initiation ceremony for those wanting to join. Excellent.

Ladders and leagues

Hopefully, when games start shipping with built-in Wireplay options, stuff like leagues and ladders will become fully automated and cheat-proof. You'll play a game and, on completion, the scores or the times or whatever will be downloaded directly onto the Wireplay leaderboard for instant status. BT also plans to have large scale tournaments with sizeable cash and software prizes.



(Right) Why risk having a cue broken over your ear by a drunken sailor in a grotty dockside pub with no Guinness, when you can play eight, nine, or fifteen ball pool in the comfort of your own armchair?

"You have to remember that we're not a subscriber service," explains Warren. "People don't buy into the system with their credit cards or whatever. They can come and use it whenever they want. And as it's linked to the phone system, peoples' 'accounts' stay there for whenever they want to use them."

Well, it all sounds cool, but we all know that no matter how well BT drenches its concrete corporate image with dear old Bob Hoskins' liver spots, BT will still remain, in our minds, The People We Give Lots Of Money To Every Three Months (Reluctantly). And with existing games servers already out there nourishing a blossoming *Doom* community, isn't BT worried that the home-grown stuff might hamper its success?

"Obviously, games like *Doom* are an important part of our strategy," counters Warren. "But we believe that with more choice and more backing from games developers themselves, we will attract a broader range of gamers. Especially those who don't play *Doom*."

So far Wireplay is only at the beta-test stage, gearing up for a launch this summer. The company is being particularly cagey about the price – its cards are firmly stapled to its torso. We can but try:

PC Zone: So, this uh, service – it's not going to be free, is it?
Wireplay: Correct.
PC Zone: So, ah, how much will it cost?
Wireplay: We haven't finalised the pricing yet.
PC Zone: Okay. But say – hypothetically – you worked for a national communications company who was planning to launch a modem games service, how much do you reckon you would charge for it?
Wireplay: Huh?
PC Zone: 50p an hour?
Wireplay: No way.
PC Zone: £1.00 an hour?
Wireplay: Nope.
PC Zone: £2.00 an hour?
Wireplay: Nope.
PC Zone: £2.50 an hour?
Wireplay: No way.
PC Zone: Ah-hah! Z

Be a beta-tester for Wireplay

COMPETITION

Yes, it's true! *PC Zone*, in conjunction with some company called British Telecom, is offering 50 – yes, five-oh – beta-test places on the exclusive six month Wireplay test time. All you have to do is fill in all the information on this form, be over 18, and own a phone, a PC (386 or above), and a modem (9600 baud or better), and get your form in before 15 January 1996.

We know it's short notice, but that's when Club Wireplay kicks into action. As part of this exclusive group of testers, you can make an impact on how this new service will look, taste and feel. And you'll get to play your fave games on-line. And you'll probably* receive lots of goodies from eager software companies. And you'll have fun.

* We're not making any promises.

Send your entries to:
It's Good To Frag
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

Rules
Sorry, but we can't accept entries by phone or by e-mail. All entries must arrive by 15 January 1996; the winners will be the first 50 entries out of the hat, who will be contacted by British Telecom. No employees of Dennis Publishing or BT or their relatives may enter this competition.

I would very much like to be a beta-tester for BT Wireplay .....
(I am over 18 signed)

My name is .....

My address is .....

.....Postcode .....

My home telephone no. is: .....

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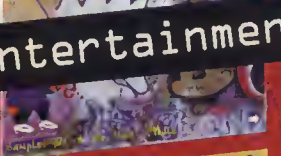

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- Roast in Internet Hell - the Blender team give you the low down on downloading.
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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

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Windows 3.1 (or later) with DOS 6.2 (or later)
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CD-ROM drive (double speed or better recommended)

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BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess
(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Hmmm... It looks like it's stalemate for the *Battle Chess* series.

Dino Force (CD)
(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
As you can see by our score, we reckon this is a criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms
(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
The rather second-rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker
(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
As if it's not bad enough that this is an appallingly bad poker game, it's also a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0
(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Simulation £35.00
The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying 'game'.

Gear Works
(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99
Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit
(50) Hit Squad – Driving Game £12.99
Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2
(30) Hit Squad – Driving Game £12.99
Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II
(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings
(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time
(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99
Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars
(75) Revell – Racing £59.99
Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone else.

Patriot
(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95
A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands
(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99
One for the RPG addicts.

Solitaire's Journey
(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99
The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold
(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders
(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99
Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

The Silver Seal (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)
(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask, 'Why?'

Troddlers
(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 8 – December 1993

Dino Angelo
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to *Ultima*.

Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.

Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Goblins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. We know, give it a job with *PC Zone*.

Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle II
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.

Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
It's reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC is hindered unless you have a gamepad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Simulator £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
It's still the best computer wargame system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Grand
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting; the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, this is an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innsbruck
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.

Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving Game £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift
(70) Kixx – Puzzle Game £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is 'fascinating' but it isn't the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
One look at the poor score should be enough to tell you what we think of the game. Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and longterm playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So come on then, what are you waiting for?!

World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
An innovative mix of naval strategy and action, though unfortunately the gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations.

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
Absolutely brilliant! What the PC was made for.

Alone In the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy *B-Wing* or, er, something else.

(Left) *X-Wing:* groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics.

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. For very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Oomark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very 'magic' at all.

Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best 'fun' simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets
(70) PAW P&M – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of RPG that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Oomark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilization*.

Hand Of Fate
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Litil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but the battle scenes are dull.

The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Oynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best. Need we say more?

Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).

Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.

Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.

Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £T8A
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure Game £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is *the* strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Oomark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that *Windows* users have ever played.

Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.

Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.

Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.

Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.
F1
(40) Oomark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.
Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Simulation £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.
Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.
Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Simulation
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*.'
Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.
Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.
Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.
Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got 'real' and produced a playable and accessible RPG.
Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.
RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
Stunning program which will be hard to beat.
Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.
Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.
Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.
TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.
UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.
Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

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Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.
Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.
Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.
Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.
Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy Game £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.
Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.
Eye Of The Storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.
Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.
Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.
Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.
Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.
Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.
Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.
Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Oaze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.
Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.
Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.
Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.
Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.
Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.
Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.
The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.
The Rock 'n' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.
The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.
Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.
UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.
Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.
Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.
World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

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1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!
Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.
Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.
Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!
Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.
Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.
Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.
Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.
International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.
Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...
Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.
Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.
Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.
Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.
Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.
Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.
Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.
Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.
Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!
Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.
World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.
Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.
D-Day
(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.
FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.
Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.
Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.
International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.
Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.
Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.
On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.
Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.
Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.
Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.
Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.
TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.
Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).
Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.
Helmdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.
Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.
IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).
Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing:* great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max:* The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)

KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.
Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.
Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.
Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.
Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.
Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?
Under A Killing Moon (CD)
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.
Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.
Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.
Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.
Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.
Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.
Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.
Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.
KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...
NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.
PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.
Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.
System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone in the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.
Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.
Dreamweb
(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.
Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.
FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.
Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.
Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.
Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.
Rise Of The Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.
Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.
Star Crusader
(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.
Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.
Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Sim £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.
All New World Of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.
Armored Fist (CD)
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99
Commanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.
Creature Shock
(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.
Cyberwar
(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.
Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99
Love it for its brains, not for its looks.
Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.
Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.
Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Oesigner for Windows £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.
Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'
Power Drive
(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99
Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.
Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good, too.
Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.
US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.
Warcraft
(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3
(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.
Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.
Commander Blood
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.
Cyberia
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.
Dragon Lore
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?
Hammer Of The Gods
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.
Kyrandia 3
(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!
Lion King
(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.
NASCAR Racing
(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99
Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.
Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.
Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. But don't be put off by that – it's actually quite good.
Voyeur
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and bras in it, but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).
Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.
Dark Forces
(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.
Doom Clones: Head To Head
(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).
Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.
Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?
King's Quest VII
(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99
The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.
Knights Of Xentar
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!
Menzoberanzan
(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.
Metaltech: Earthsiege
(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCS that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?
Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail
(85: Recommended) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade Of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...
SuperKarts
(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.
TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?
Wings Of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reaches for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99
Chuck Rock meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

(Left) *Theme Park: Sim City* eat your heart out.

Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could actually be quite good.
BioForge
(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99
The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?
Descent
(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.
Heretic
(78) ID/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'*Doom*-in-tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.
Iron Assault
(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.
Legions
(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!
Lost Eden
(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!
Cyclones
(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.
Football Glory
(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.
Guilty
(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.
Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.
NBA Live
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.
Renegade
(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.
Rise of the Triad
(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.
Super Frog
(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.
Tank Commander
(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!
Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth
(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!
X-COM
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date
(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?
Full Throttle
(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.
Flight Of The Amazon Queen
(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
Well, this tries desperately to be a LucasArts adventure but fails quite miserably. Sorry Warner Interactive, but it's naff.
Hardball 4
(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?
High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.
Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.
PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
A very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.
Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.
Slipstream 5000
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Slipstream is a three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.
Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.
Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90: Classic) Gametek – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was 'games with very long names'. Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.
Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape – Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.
Virtua Chess
(85: Recommended) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.
Warriors
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.
Alex Dampier Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.
Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.
Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner – Sports Simulation £39.99
Top-down ice hockey gams, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.
Chaos Control
(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.
Command & Conquer
(95: Classic) Virgin – Strategy Adventure £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.
Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.
Dominus
(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.
Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Simulation £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.
Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.
Loadstar
(35) 8MG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.
Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.
Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccers* of this world.
Sim Tower
(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive – and the presentation is dire.
Virtual Pool
(91: Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 – August 1995

Civil War
(83: Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.
FX Fighters
(93: Classic) Philips/GTE – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!
Hi-Octane
(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts – Racing Game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.
Micro Machines 2
(92: Classic) Codemasters – Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.
Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark – Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.
Perfect General 2
(82: Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.
Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire – Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.
Prisoner Of Ice
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The second game in Infogrames' *Cthulhu* range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.
Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design – Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.
Silverload
(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.
Striker 95
(62) Time Warner – Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.
Ultimate Doom
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?
Vortex
(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive Movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game, It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

Issue 30 – September 1995

Across the Rhine
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.
Action Soccer
(50) Ubisoft – Football Sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.
Air Power
(84: Recommended) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.
AIV Networks
(80: Recommended) Infogrames – Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)
Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay – Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.
Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra – Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.
Lords Of Midnight
(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.
Sim Town
(81: Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

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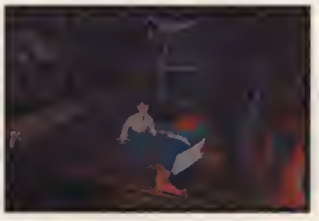
(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3:* More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer.* A case of *Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2.*



Simon Tha Sorcerer 2
(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure Game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra – Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity
(80: Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up Game £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issua 31 – October 1995

EF2000
(97: Classic) Ocean/DID – Flight Sim £49.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Racing £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3DO now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *F1GP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow
(96: Classic) Digital Integration – Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time
(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away
(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2
(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Oomark – Sport £44.99 (T8C)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Issua 32 – November 1995

Al Unser Jr Racing
(60) Mindscape – Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy
(93: Classic) Virgin – Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast
(68) 7th Level – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with excellent animation, cut scenes and special effects – but that's it. Shame, 'cos it looks great, but as for gameplay – forget it.

Burn:Cycle
(85: Recommended) Philips – Interactive Adventure £44.99
One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun
(70) American Laser Games/Mirage – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker
(62) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons and lots to shoot at, but apart from that not much more.

Fatal Racing
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Racing £T8C
Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits – totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used to great effect in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). Definitely one of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
New and improved! Now includes two new Championsip courses, you can play *as* or *against* 14 actual photo-realsitic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: Tha Mayan Adventure
(70) Activision – Platform £44.99
Conversion of the ancient Atari VCS platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage
(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Jurassic Park for psychopaths – yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.

Issua 33 – Decembar 1995

Allan Odyssey
(77) Philips – Space Adventure £44.99
A sort of cross between *BioForge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor
(93: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf
(88: Recommended) Novalogic/ US Gold – Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99
The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one as well for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim around, but it still has plenty to recommend it.

Crusader
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off – bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby
(90: Classic) Sony Interactive – Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the PC... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics – need we say more?

FIFA '96
(84: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you quite like it, it's worth buying this one. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Naval Simulation £44.99
Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future – you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria
(50) Sierra – Adventure £49.99
Brave effort but the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior
(61) Gametek – Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is unfortunately nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer
(89: Recommended) VIE – Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcadey indeed.

Worms
(84: Recommended) Ocean – Strategy £34.99
Worms is what you get if you cross *Lemmings* with *Cannon Fodder*. Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play – good fun.

Witchaven
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99
Packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modem options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects – and if you're looking for gore you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent – we like it.

Issua 34 – January 1996

Actua Soccer
(92: Classic) Gremlin Interactive – Sport £T8C
Ranking alongside *Command & Conquer* as *the* office favourite at the moment, this is currently the best footie game on the PC thanks to excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement – sorry *FIFA* and *Sensi*, but you'll have to step aside.

Entomorph
(78) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £44.99
If you've already got *Ultima VII* and fancy something similar in style, *Entomorph* is worth a look. It's got a fairly engrossing storyline, although the presentation is somewhat lacklustre.

Fighter Duel
(65) Philips Media – Flight Sim £39.99
There's very little to say about this game as there's actually very little to it – don't expect it to keep you riveted to the screen; even what little scenery there is is dull.

F1 Grand Prix Manager
(85: Recommended) MicroProse – Racing £44.99
One of the most imaginative management simulations around – certainly the best Grand Prix one available, but then it's the only one.

Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of The Monster
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
Starring Tim Curry, this is an excellent gothic adventure. The puzzles are challenging, the storyline is cleverly structured, the visuals are sumptuous, but sadly it's hampered by a dodgy interface which makes it difficult to navigate your way through the locations.

IndyCar 2
(90: Classic) Papyrus/Virgin – Racing £34.99
Polygontastic with absolutely glorious SVGA graphics. If you already own *IndyCar 1*, hold out for *F1GP2* instead. But if you don't, buy this one. Oh, but if we're really honest here, you ought to try to afford *F1GP2* as well.

Mortal Coil
(50) Vic Tokai/Virgin – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Is this yet another *Doom* clone? It basically involves loads of shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective. A great idea on paper, but it's let down by poor graphics and voiceovers (even with the dubious talents of Dani Behr) – you may well prefer *Hexen*.

Pinball World
(77) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £44.99
For some reason there seems to be more pinball and footie games coming out than you could possibly want, and although you've got a choice of table layouts (which you don't really need anyway) it doesn't really offer anything markedly different.

Pro Pinball: The Web
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Pinball £34.99
Don't discount this game simply because it only features one table – it's positively packed with features, you can see the table in its entirety or from six different viewpoints, it's realistic (you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and it's got a totally stonking soundtrack.

Rebel Assault II
(90: Classic) LucasArts/VIE – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
If you can't see what all the fuss about *Star Wars* is about or you didn't like the original *Rebel Assault*, chances are you won't like this one. On the other hand, if you're a die-hard Empire/Rebel fan and spend your nights re-enacting scenes between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, you'll love it. Of course solid action, 'real' live action bits, bloody gorgeous graphics and a corking storyline go some way to recommend it as well.

Sensible World Of Soccer
(60) Warner Interactive – Sport £39.99
We waited a long time for this one. It's got some management bits, some nice rendered cut-scenes and commentary, but it's still not a patch on *Actua Soccer*.

Stonekeep
(76) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
It looks a bit dated (mainly because it's flick-screen), but in its favour it has a nice, easy to handle control method, a wide variety of levels to keep you interested and a very thoughtful experience system which allows your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them.

Su27 Flanker
(95: Classic) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Developed by Russian pilots, this is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. It's no lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky' type product, but unfortunately it's let down by a lack of network or serial link multi-play facility. If you want a comparison it's better than *EF2000*, *MiG29* and *Tornado*.

Tha Dig
(87: Recommended) LucasArts/VIE – Adventure £44.99
Another offering touched by the hand of Spielberg. It's a proper adventure with a proper story, a cut above your usual sci-fi adventure stuff. And it's got great music.

Tilt
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive – Pinball £T8C
You get six tables to choose from (including Monster, Funfair, Gangster, Sci-Fi, Myst and Majik). It doesn't have the depth of the single table in *The Web*, but it's good all the same.

Williams Arcade Classics
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Various £29.99
Worth buying for an arcade-perfect version of *Defender* alone, this '80s compilation also includes *Robotron 2084*, *Stargate Defender 2*, *Joust*, *Bubbles* and *Sinistar*. The graphics obviously aren't too hot given the age of the titles, but don't hold that against it.

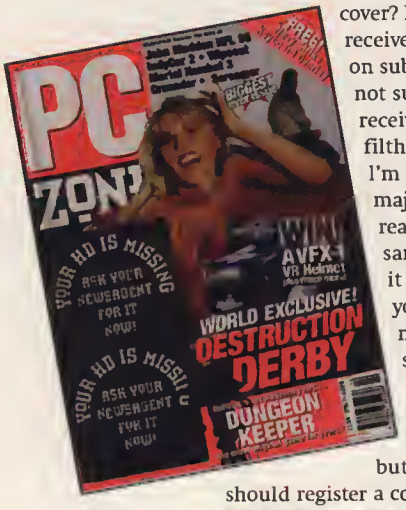
WipeOut
(78) Sony Interactive – Racing £44.99
Winging its way directly from the PlayStation, this game of anti-gravity racing with floating cars unfortunately seems to have lost something in the conversion. If you play it on anything other than a Pentium, you can kiss the PC version's smoothness and graphical details goodbye. Top marks for the soundtrack though, which is brilliant.

WORDPROCESSOR

Breasts, bulldozers, brimstone and er, some other words beginning with B. As ever, the *PC Zone* letters page attracts its usual clientele.

ARE YOU LOOKING AT MY TITS? PART ONE

I am writing to complain about the gratuitous use of the girl on the front of your December issue. Was it really necessary to have this particular image emblazoned across the cover? My 15 year-old son receives your magazine on subscription and I'm not sure if I want him receiving this sort of filth through the post. I'm sure that the vast majority of your readers are of the same age and I find it disgusting that you are producing a magazine with this sort of cover.



I know that there is nothing you can do about it, but I just feel that I should register a complaint.

G Hoskin, Brighton

The image that we used on the December cover (above) was the image used in all of the advertising for Destruction Derby. *The picture was the subject of some considerable debate when we were putting the actual cover together, and is quite possibly one of the most disputed things that* PC Zone *has ever done. The choice was basically between that and a rendered car. In retrospect, I feel that we went with the right decision.*

Although we are a games magazine, you are quite wrong in your assumption that the majority of our readers are, like your son, around 15 years old. Our reader survey data for the past two years has indicated that the average PC Zone *reader is male, and in his mid-twenties. With this in mind we felt that our cover was appropriate.*

ARE YOU LOOKING AT MY TITS? PART TWO

Just a quick note to say that I thought the December issue of *PC Zone* was just absolutely brilliant. The cover was a bit daring and admittedly my wife had a slight problem with it, but in the end it has to be said that you did something completely different. No other games magazine could do something like that and get away with it. It's a shame she wasn't a little bit better looking though, wasn't it? I know she was just there for titillation but she wasn't exactly a sex goddess, was she?

Ed Broughton, Lancs

Apparently (and we didn't know this at the time) the young lady in question was actually a page three model. I don't read The Sun *myself, so I wasn't aware of this. Anyway, I'm glad you liked it, and in a way I'm glad you didn't fancy her as well. We've had a lot of stick for doing a cover that was exploitative and immoral, so the fact that you didn't think she was gorgeous is sort of good, if you think about it. And anyway, it was Sony's photo shoot, not ours. It worked though, didn't it?*

CAN'T USE COVER DISKS

Why is it necessary for you to use cover disks that have no write protect tag? This means that after installing the software I have to throw the disk away because I can't reformat it and use it again. If the disks had tags I wouldn't have to do this, would I?

Attend to this, or else the bulldozer (pictured below) will drive straight through your offices.

The Krazy Kardinal, Herts

Have you ever heard of sticky tape? If you cover up the write protect hole you'll find that you are able to use the disk. Hello, is there anybody there? Dime Bar?

TOP DESTRUCTION

I'd like to start off by saying that I have absolutely nothing to do with Psygnosis whatsoever, and all that I am about to say here is completely true.

I've just bought a copy of *Destruction Derby* and I just can't believe my eyes! It's the first game that I have bought that can truly be described as great. I don't know what machine you reviewed it on, but it ran a treat on my DX100.

I normally buy about three games a month (after reading your fairly accurate reviews), and without fail they turn out to be absolute shite after the initial fun of making them work – but *Destruction Derby* is different. How do they get the graphics to look like they're SVGA? I'm sure they're not though.

John Archer, Wakefield

Opinions are split on this one. Some people love it and others hate it, but all can appreciate that the graphics are absolutely excellent. After the release of the PlayStation version it became the fastest selling CD-ROM product ever, for a week (until Tekken *was released). The PC version has proven to be just as popular, and we've had an enormous amount of mail from people who just wanted to express their love of the product. What a pity that the other Sony game,* WipeOut, *was nowhere near as good a conversion.*

I AM A PIRATE

I am a pirate. I obtain nearly two gigs of compressed, illegal software every month for less than the cost of a music CD. While this, I know, is highly illegal and immoral, it has enabled me to assess a large volume of PC, Amiga and console software.

The majority of the titles don't actually stay on my hard disk for longer than about half an hour, while others (notably strategy games, RPGs or adventures) can take some getting used to. The time that the average player would spend playing these games compared to the price is totally despicable. As friends of mine know, I'll often go out and buy a game if I feel that the authors deserve something back for all their efforts. Notably, I've recently bought *The Need For Speed*. What I really can't believe is that software houses feel justified in putting software such as *Cyberbykes* and *Silverload* in the same price category as

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to us here at *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, often described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

(Below) Piracy at large in Never Never Land...

Fade To Black. It's the sheer volume of crap software out there that is driving people to piracy. As Mr Gump said, "(Computer games) are like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get." I know that your job is to advise the public as to what is good and what isn't, but you'd be surprised at how many people just go into a shop and buy something without knowing anything about it.

Until the industry starts producing quality products in volume, I will continue to buy my games for 6p a throw.

Chun Kee Bona, Never Never Land

It is a travesty that something as mind-numbingly awful as Cyberbykes *can be released at a price-point even a penny over three quid, but it does happen. However, it is our job to sift out the good stuff from the complete and utter flange and let you lot know which games are worth buying.*

While I can appreciate your point about piracy, I obviously can't sit here and go "Yeah, too bloody right mate", but I can say one thing that is worth everyone *thinking about: half of that software you've got – would you ever have bothered with it if you couldn't get it for 6p? I doubt it. With games all retailing for around £40 it is doubtful that you would ever consider it. I can offer another pompous magazine-editor comment on this as well though, and that is that our cover discs are actually meant to do the job of your little piracy network. By trying out the demos on the CD you can see which games you like the look of and which ones you think are crap. Between the reviews and the disc you should get a pretty good idea of what the latest games are like.*

Having said this though, I can appreciate the 'greed factor' that kicks in when you have access to virtually every game ever released. This means that rather than just getting hold of the decent games there is a tendency to want everything; I'm pretty sure that this is clouding your judgement a bit.

Still, it's a shame you didn't give us your real name and address coz we could have made a bloody fortune.

Quake questions

As ever we've had a lot of mail and e-mail from people who want to know what is going on with Quake. *Obviously it's a concern for all of you, so we do our best to answer your questions. There's still not that much known about the game, although we do have some news on it – turn to our Bulletin section for the latest update. GT Interactive has no idea when it's going to be released other than quoting iD, who has said that it will only be released "when it's finished"!*

Has anyone got any idea when *Quake* is going to be released? I'd heard a rumour that it would be in the first quarter of 1996. Is this true?

Phil Trueman, Wolverhampton

Where did you hear a rumour like that?

Just what the hell is going on with *Quake*? While surfing around *Quaketalk* the other day, I noticed a message posted by the iD boys themselves that implied that all currently published information about *Quake* should be ignored. What is going on? Have all of the screenshots and bits of information you've been printing been wrong?

T Collins, Oxford

We have actually no idea what is going on; when we ran our feature about Quake *it was in good faith. Jay Wilbur demonstrated the product to us at a recent trade show and we simply printed every screenshot we could get our hands on, along with all the information he gave us. Why should we doubt what one of the top bods at iD says? If it is all lies, fair enough. All we did was report what was thought to be true. Maybe the guys at iD aren't happy with what they've done on the game and they've had a bit of a rethink. Who really knows what goes on over there? Who knows if the message wasn't just a bit of a joke to wind people up? As soon as we have any information about* Quake, *you can be sure that we will print it – see our Bulletin section.*

From what I've picked up about *Quake* it sounds very similar to *Hexen*. Is this right, or am I just a bit stupid?

Brian Connell, Liverpool

No, it's not and yes, you are.

TOO EASY?

I am writing to complain about present day games, in particular *Dungeon Master II* from Interplay. Things are just getting too bloody simple. I completed *DMII* in just under ten hours – a ridiculous time for a forty quid game. The same thing happened with *Dark Forces*, *TIE Fighter*, *Stone Prophet* and *Eye Of The Beholder 3* – and I'm not that good a gamesplayer.

There are only two solutions to this problem: either make games much harder, or add difficulty levels. The former would just piss a lot of people off and very often the latter only ends up with extra bad guys being added to the mix. *TIE Fighter* is the only game I know of where difficulty missions make any difference, because the mission structure actually changes. Why can't all games be like this?

Kristian Aspinall, Lancs

...'And I'm not that good at games' lah-di-dah, shyeah right, and I suppose that this isn't just an arrogant example of you trying to show off, is it? Okay, I'll agree with you that Dungeon Master II *is a bit crap, but nevertheless I doubt very much if you really did it in ten hours. And you reckon that* TIE Fighter *was easy, was it? Oh right, well why didn't you play it on a proper difficulty setting rather than 'snivelling complacent little wimp level' then, eh?*

Your point about Dark Forces *is duly noted though – it is too easy once you've got the hang of it and, if anything, it suffers from the same 'problem' that most LucasArts games have – it's so bloody playable that you don't want the thing to end.* »

(Above) *PC Zone* fails to improve UK/New Zealand relations...

NEW ZEALAND IS REALLY GREAT

In your review of the game *Worms* in issue 33, Patrick McCarthy referred to bungee jumping as "for New Zealanders to while away the time in their tedious country". As a New Zealander I must say that I'm delighted to see my country promoted in this way in Britain.

If your *Worms* review stopped just one more Brit from visiting (or even worse, migrating) to NZ, then you are doing God's work. Keep it up.

I have no interest in computer games as I believe that they are for the British dullard to while away the time in his tedious, smelly old country.

Dylan McGovern, London

Er, okay Dylan. Cheers. Happy New Year. Or something.

SHANE SUCKS

Why do you waste so much time with Shane Ritchie? Why even waste precious oxygen on someone such as this? What has this insignificant wannabe done to deserve the scorn of an entire nation? Don't you realise that this constant ridicule is gaining him recognition, and worse, sympathy!?!?! If we're not careful he may even become an icon.

Lee, Stockport

Okay, so don't bother talking about him yourself then. It's so easy when you think about it, isn't it?

CHAMP MANAGER ON-LINE

I believe that modems and the so-called superhighway could be put to a far, far better use than just information. I know that people play multi-player *Doom*, but what about a nation-wide game of *Championship Manager 2*? One hundred or so people could all take control of their own team and the computer could play all of the others.

People could log-on at a set time and play their fixture; if they didn't turn up then the match could be forfeited, or the team could stay the same as the last time the player touched it.

There could be a fully operational transfer market; if a manager made a bid for a player he could leave messages on the BBS and start negotiations – just like the real thing.

If this happens, could I be Blackpool?

Mark Cullen, Blackpool

When we were working with Domark during the development of Championship Manager 2 *we actually discussed with them the possibilities of a multi-player aspect. Unfortunately though, because the game was never designed to work in this way, it would be very difficult for them to simply provide a multi-player add-on pack to allow Internet gaming. According to the games' producer, making such modifications would actually require them to rewrite most of the game. As a result of this they have earmarked multi-player features for the inevitable follow-up,* Championship Manager 3, *which we should see in late 1996.*

In the meantime, if you want to play a multi-player football management game on-line, Team 17 has been working on a product in its new Internet games division. Although it doesn't use real teams, it does cover most of the features that you mentioned in your letter. You can contact Team 17 on 01924 267776 for more information.

And er, the answer's no. You can't be Blackpool. So there.

(Right) Marc Cullen would like to see multi-player football management games on the information superhighway – but out of all the teams he wants to be Blackpool... *Blackpool?!* So just to piss him off, here's Wolverhampton instead.

SATAN SPEAKS

I suppose you don't get that many letters from the Underworld – this is one, just in case you didn't realise.

Firstly, I have a complaint to make about iD Software. The bastards at that software company have been sending their characters over to my home, killing my slaves and going to the extreme of leaving my pet spider, Gordon, in several bits on the carpet. Then they went and made the plot to *Doom 2* something slanderous and terrible about Hell trying to invade the Earth. We're perfectly happy down here, thanks very much. As you have such excellent connections with iD, could you either throttle their boss or send them a parcel bomb?

Part deux of my letter concerns a list of individuals who I have marked with a 'Special Torture Warrant'. These people are allowed to be tortured as much as possible (and yes, Shane Ritchie is included on the list – about 30 times); if anyone feels that someone should be nominated, why don't they write in and let *PC Zone* know?

Anyway, you'd better print this because my special 'sticking sharp wooden implements into long-haired people' finger is twitching again.

Satan, Hell

Yeah, all right mate. There you go. I've printed it. Now don't write again, will you? Cheers.

NEW ISSUE

On sale 5 January

Mr Cursor

He's afraid of ... Gilly Goolden, and molecules

He's afraid of... Gilly Goolden, eh? And in case you're saying "Gilly who?", I'll just jog your memory by adding the names of two TV shows: BBC2's *Food And Drink*, and BBC1's *The Great Antiques Hunt*. Yes, that's her... the wine-tasting bint with the marbles-in-the-mouth accent. But Gilly comes later. I want to talk first about 'nano technology'.

So, nano technology. Only last week there was a question about nano technology on *Family Fortunes*. Or sort of – you might even have noticed it yourself if you happen to be as sad as me and actually watch such drivel. It was the final stage as I remember – the winning family was going for the car and the cash; the lights had been dimmed, and the audience was all of a hush.

"Name a country, other than Great Britain, where English is the main language," said the ultra-talented Les Dennis. "Er, Germany," said Captain Divvo of the Moron family. (Uh-awwww, went the buzzer.) "Something that you eat," said Les. "A drum!" replied Captain Divvo. (Uh-awwww.) "A shade of blue," replied Les, grasping the pathetic contestant even more firmly around the shoulders. "Er, red... reddy blue," was Captain Divvo's response. (Uh-awwww.) The silence of the audience now hung like a fog. "Something you can walk through," said Les, desperately. "A road," said Captain Divvo. (Uh-awwww.)

So that was that regarding the car, but 600 quid was still available. Les shifted his footing, sighed resignedly, and asked his final question, which was this: "Name something that is very, very small." Les dug his fingers painfully into Captain Divvo's right shoulder, caught his eye, and emphasised the point: "VERY small."

I was shouting furiously at the telly by this time, as was probably everyone else in the entire country: "An atom; a grain of sand; a snowflake; a molecule; an electron; a pea. Your brain! Come on, you thick bastard!"

"A bungalow," said Captain Divvo.

Jesus Christ.

Appallingly, this bloke had actually reproduced, as he'd jovially explained to Les earlier in the proceedings. So much for Darwin. But anyway, at least Captain Divvo's ridiculous failure to come up with a very small thing brings us neatly back to nano technology, a subject on which, thanks to several conversations with a scientist chum of mine, I'm an expert. Yes, an expert. Listen to this...

Nano technology is going to affect absolutely everything sooner than we think, including leisure software and hardware. Yup, from now on games are going to take on a completely different flavour, a different dimension even. You'll be able to make them up yourself, and customise them to the nth degree. Let me sketch out a possible scenario...

Okay, so you've got this sort of home-based 'factory' thing in your lounge, not unlike a *Star Trek* replicator. You download data into the device and it then creates whatever you asked for, at a molecular level. And this is where dear Gilly Goolden comes in, because the game I want us to play is a Gilly Goolden Simulator. So, our replicator's been given Gilly's image and her basic dimensions; it already knows how to make skin, bones, and frizzy hair, and it can construct tiny engines to move everything about. Gilly's retinas are miniature video cameras, and one of us (let's say me) is wearing a 'tacti-suit', a sort of mega-joystick.

What's more, when I speak, my words come out of Sim Gilly's mouth in her real-life tones – thanks to the sound samples we fed into the replicator. The idea behind our game is to sneak our Gilly into the *Food And Drink* studio and, well, whatever happens happens. Let's play it by ear. Game on!

(Sim Gilly enters the BBC building unhindered by security, and saunters along to the Food And Drink studio. Her co-host, Chris Kelly, is already there...)

Chris Kelly: Hi Gilly. I thought you were still over in France.

Sim Gilly: *(Huskily)* Chris, darling! Super, fun, everything's wonderful. My whole middle class world is magnificently decorative, with a cheeky aftertaste. I'm so posh!

Chris Kelly: Oh, er, good.

Sim Gilly: Glorious, splendid, super, full-bodied, wonderful, charming, it's such fun, definitely Elizabethan, all the rage, splendid, marvellous!

Chris Kelly: Er, right. Um...

(Back at base with the tacti-suit...)

"What do we do now?"... "I don't know, how about we explode her?"... "We can't, she's not loaded!"... "Make her strip off or something then, make her spin round like a crazy naked whirling dervish!"... "No, too obvious!"... "How about she trashes the set?"... "That's too obvious as well!"... "Okay, how about she just suddenly kicks Chris Kelly rather nastily in the nuts?"... "Hmmm, it's a start I suppose. Here goes!"

Chris Kelly: Oooooff!!!

Game over, Gilly

And so on. Actually, maybe having complete control over a game isn't such a good idea. Who wants total freedom? I reckon we should forget about progress altogether, really, and simply leave Hollywood to carry on calling the shots, seeing as how they're the ones with the money. It'd be a shame if they went bust by the year 2006, wouldn't it?

So forget nano technology and all its implications – go and load up the latest interactive movie instead. Let's just sit in front of them like cabbages. And hey, if we're really, really lucky it might even be written and directed by Stephen Spielberg. (Hip hip, hooray!) Z

Apache-Longbow... frontline action with unprecedented detail, realism and gameplay. From quickstart free-for-all to demanding real-world missions... Apache-Longbow rules the battlefield - day and night.
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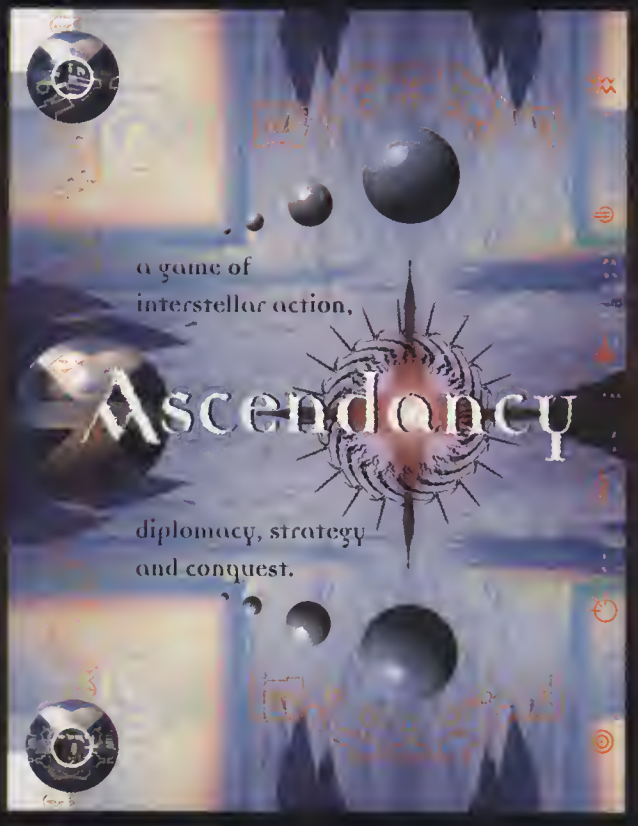

PC CD-ROM

THE LOGIC FACTORY

Virgin INTERACTIVE entertainment

The age of discovery is upon you.
Explore the unknown using a delicate balance
of courage and caution.
Ascendancy is a galactic strategy game of
exploration and encounter.
Take control of any one of the 21 species while
you attempt to cultivate your planet's
knowledge, industrial capabilities
and military might.
The survival of an entire species is at stake.
Will your people fade into obscurity or gain
Ascendancy over a galaxy?

- Ascendancy's sophisticated Artificial Intelligence extends gameplay and offers indepth interaction and diplomacy with alien species.

- The game features superb SVGA graphics.

- The comprehensive tutorial mode coupled with a simple and intuitive interface ensures instant access to the game and in depth help throughout.

- Digital soundtrack featuring an original score and realistic sound effects.